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PHILOSOPHY

SAUL A. KRIPKE
Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language
145pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £9.50.
0 631 13077 2

Saul Kripke has thought uncommonly hard about the central argument of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* and produced an uncommonly clear and vivid account of that argument - as it struck him. The last phrase is important to Kripke. He does not claim that his version of the argument is in every respect faithful to Wittgenstein's intentions; the latter are perhaps not sufficiently definite to be rendered precisely. Still less does he wish to be taken to be expressing his own views: these "are by no means always in agreement with Wittgenstein's". Both as expositor and as philosopher Kripke thus advertises, at the outset, a statesmanlike caution.

It is natural to suppose that when we use a word or symbol of our language, we are guided in its use by our grasp of its meaning, or of the rules or conventions for its use which we have mastered; that these are what tell us that it is correct to use the expression in such-and-such a way; to apply it to this case (if it is a descriptive term) or to compute with it in this way (if it is a mathematical symbol). So we appear to invoke some fact about our mental life to explain our confidence in the correctness of our current use of the expression. But if we take this conception seriously, it seems that there can be no guarantee that what we now take ourselves to mean by the expression is the same as what we meant by it in the past. For our past practice is consistent with our having meant by it something quite different.

Kripke illustrates the point with a mathematical example; but he remarks, justly, that it should be obvious to any reader of Nelson Goodman: perhaps by "green" in the past I meant *grue* (where anything green seen before now and anything blue seen from now on is *grue*).

The conclusion is not, of course, that we must at any moment be uncertain as to whether what I now mean by an expression is the same as what I meant by it in the past. The conclusion is that the very conception invoked in the argument, natural as it seems, is not to be taken seriously. It is illusory. There

was (and is) no such thing as the postulated mental fact or item, denoted by the phrase "my having meant in the past (or my meaning now) such-and-such by a given expression", which was supposed to have the crucial property of instructing me how it was (or is) correct for me to use that expression.

Kripke confesses to an "eerie feeling" as he contemplates this conclusion. "It seems as if the entire idea of meaning vanishes into thin air." He asks whether it is possible to escape the sceptical conclusion by seeking an acceptable candidate for the role of mental fact or item which will constitute my meaning such-and-such by an expression. He considers at length one popular answer, viz. that in learning the expression we acquire a disposition to use it in a certain way. In a sense, as we shall see, this is right; but it can be dismissed as an answer to the immediate problem, for it ignores the requirement on any such proposed fact or item that it must have a normative role, must have the character of an instruction or rule, justifying a particular use as correct.

The idea of an introspective special experience of meaning such-and-such by a given expression, though not treated with contempt either by Wittgenstein or by Kripke - for neither is behaviouristically inclined - is similarly found inadequate: no such experience could determine its own interpretation; none "could have the consequences of meaning".

Finally, an appeal to Platonic or Fregean abstract entities, eg. senses, does not help; for the problem relates, not to the abstract entities themselves, but precisely to the question how any mental state could constitute a "grasp" of any particular sense rather than another.

So much for the problem. What of the solution? Well, first we must abandon the chimerical, if natural, notion of the language-user being guided by the mental fact - his meaning such-and-such by an expression - in the light of which he judges his application of it in a particular case to be justified or correct. Rather, we must acknowledge that after a period of instruction in the use of an expression ("training") is the term beloved by Wittgensteinians, though its military or circus-animal associations may induce some uneasiness, the learner simply comes to find it "utterly natural" to use

the expression in a certain way, does so "as a matter of course". So far, this seems to echo the rejected dispositional account. But matters cannot be left there: for, of course, the bare fact that someone finds it utterly natural to proceed in a certain way is no guarantee that he is proceeding in the right way. If we advert only to the way the learner or speaker finds it natural to use the expression, the notion of *correct* use seems to be left out of account altogether. Or, worse, if we try to bring it in by identifying "correct use" with "use the finds it natural for make", we are abolishing the distinction between "correct" and "seems to him correct"; and that is tantamount to destroying the notion of correctness altogether, depriving us of the right to speak of correctness.

And now the way lies open to the full solution. There must indeed be a place for the idea of correct use. And there is such a place. There is such a place because language is essentially a social phenomenon. We are not dealing - indeed the whole argument implies that we *could not* be dealing - with individual language-users considered in isolation. We are dealing with communities of language-users. And the test of correctness of use of an expression is the test of conformity - or failure of conformity - with the use of the expression in a given community. Evidently, for this to be a test, in the case of expressions applicable to what happens in nature, there must be shared or sharable access to circumstances in which members of the speech-community agree, and can be observed to agree, in the application of the expression; ie. there must be publicly observable bases for the application of such expressions. It is these which Wittgenstein calls "criteria". Hence the famous doctrine that expressions for inner processes stand in need of outer criteria. The private-language argument about inner processes and outer criteria, sensation-language etc, is, then, to be seen as a consequence, an application, of the more general considerations to the effect that grasp of meanings, following a meaning-rule etc, is a matter of conformity to an agreed common practice, a matter of sharing, as Wittgenstein puts it, in a common "form of life".

Similar considerations will apply, on this view, where what is in question is not a matter of empirical application of an expression to objects or events in

the natural world, but a matter of computation or calculation, of what follows logically from what, of what is recognized as a demonstrative proof and so on. Here again there is rough general agreement in practice, readiness to agree on what is a mistake etc. or, in general, a shared form of life; and anyone who shares in this form of life, who has acquired in these respects the same dispositions as other members of the speech-community, is said to have mastered the relevant concepts or operations.

The great point, on this view of the matter, is that there is, philosophically speaking, nothing behind all this, and no need for anything beyond or behind it all to constitute a philosophical explanation of it. That is not to say that there are no biological and anthropological or cultural-historical explanations of how speech-communities agreeing in common linguistic practices came about. Such explanations there may well be. But as far as the philosophical problem is concerned, the suggestion is that we can just rest with, or take as primitive, the great natural fact that we *do* form speech-communities, agree in linguistic practice and so on; that we have, if you will, a natural disposition to develop the dispositions which qualify us for the description, "members of a speech-community, agreeing in a common linguistic practice". The great natural fact covers the phenomena. It is unnecessary, misleading and, as has been argued, paradox-generating to appeal to problematic mental states of "meaning something by an expression" to explain the phenomena. Rather, those very phrases which came into question at the outset - our grasp of a concept or a meaning, our mastery of rules for the use of an expression etc - can now be harmlessly reinstated and understood in the unproblematic terms we have before us.

Thus, in summary, the argument of the main text of Kripke's book: an argument set out with all the clarity, lucidity and economy that one expects of its author. One conclusion of an exegetical character, seems to be established beyond question: viz. that Wittgenstein's Private Language Argument, which has been the occasion, on the part of so many philosophical commentators, of so much perplexed or complacent discussion, is in essentials complete before that point in the *Investigations* is

reached at which it has been generally thought to begin.

On some other points, of varying degrees of importance, there may still seem to be room for doubts. (It should be remembered that Kripke has not excluded doubt in his own case.)

Philosophers often offer "analyses" of ordinary forms of assertion as constructions of the incoherent constructions which other philosophers, or less sophisticated persons in their more reflective moments, might suppose those assertions to bear. We may be inclined to construe Wittgenstein's solution to the sceptical problem about meaning as just such an analysis of ordinary forms of assertion concerning someone's meaning something by an expression, following a rule, having grasped a concept etc. Kripke indeed allows that Wittgenstein should be seen as specifying the conditions which legitimate or justify such assertions; but he distinguishes these sharply from specifying "truth-conditions" for such assertions: if truth-conditions alone could give them meaning, we should have, he says, in accordance with the sceptical argument, to declare all such assertions meaningless.

This seems far from obvious. It gives one pause. Then one reads, "All that is needed to legitimize assertions that someone means something is that there be roughly specifiable circumstances under which they are legitimately assertible No supposition that 'facts correspond' to these assertions is needed." But isn't the "circumstance" that someone is using an expression in accordance with agreed common practice just such a fact?

Perhaps the feeling is that if we accepted the truth-conditions conception of analysis here, ie. with regard to assertions about what people mean by expressions, we should also have to conclude that the truth-condition of "2 + 2 = 4" is that people agree that this is so. But should we? The answer is by no means clear.

The question canvassed in the three preceding paragraphs is primarily exegetical. There is room for more substantial doubts. I remarked earlier that appeal to the notion of abstract objects of thought - concepts, senses, universals, properties, (mathematical) functions - was dismissed as leaving the sceptical problem untouched, or, at

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best, merely changing its form: the problem would now be, how any mental state could constitute "grasp" of any particular sense rather than another, or, perhaps, how any mental state could constitute the firm association of a particular expression with a particular sense. This may be right. But it seems over-hasty to dismiss the notion of the abstract object of thought as altogether irrelevant: for it may seem to have a part to play in both of the two key notions in the Kripke-Wittgenstein picture of the matter of meaning: in (1) the notion of the speaker who has been adequately "trained" in the use of an expression finding it "utterly natural" to make certain applications of it, and in (2) the elucidation (or justification) of the notion of correctness of use or application in terms of common.

publicly observable agreement in linguistic practice. Consider these in turn. Certainly we normally apply, say, a descriptive general term or predicate to an observed natural object as a matter of course; but not for no reason at all. We call something "red" or "a car" because we see it as red or as a car. In Part II of the *Investigations* Wittgenstein has much to say, though in a limited context, of the experience of seeing as; and many of the phrases he there uses strongly suggest that the bare commonplace fact of perceptual recognition contains implicitly the thought of the abstract general thing, the concept or type or universal, as exemplified in the particular case.

Again, the notion that the criterion of correct use of an expression is to be found in observable agreement in

linguistic practice requires the possibility, and fact, of our recognizing that the same thing is being said in the same type of situation, i.e. requires the recognition of identity of type over differences of cases; not only of situation-type, but of expression – or sentence-type. To deny the reality or possibility of such recognition would, on the theory's own terms, be to deny the existence of any justification or basis for saying that the use of an expression was correct; it would be to nullify the theory's own solution to the sceptical problem. But to admit it seems to be admitting that we work, and must work, with the idea of general types which are, or may be, exemplified again and again in different particular cases.

Does such an admission, if made, either diminish the force of the sceptical problem or impugn the

acceptability of what Kripke calls the sceptical solution? It is not clear that either consequence follows. But the admission, if made, has its own importance: for it tends at least to diminish the degree of encouragement which acquiescence in the Wittgensteinian position might otherwise give to a species of reductive naturalism regarding thought in general. It is a noteworthy irony that the attractions of this species of reductionism are often felt most strongly by the most scrupulous thinkers.

The main text of Kripke's book occupies little more than a hundred pages. It is followed by a short "Postscript" entitled "Wittgenstein and Other Minds", dealing with a line of thought which antedates Wittgenstein's concern with the

sceptical problem about meaning and which can be traced from the *Tractatus* through into the *Investigations* and beyond. The argument, beginning from the Lichtenbergian (and Humean) insight that Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* moves, swiftly and irresistibly to the conclusion that the sense of expressions for inner states such as pain, is internally connected with the outward and manifest manifestations of those states. It is a relatively familiar argument, and of which there are to be found in Wittgenstein's; but nowhere has it been more clearly and compellingly presented than by Kripke. His Postscript is an exemplary piece of exposition and one, moreover, that does not destroy for ever the view is behaviouristic.

G. E. M. DE STE CROIX

The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests
72pp. Duckworth. £38 (paperback £15). 0715607383

ANDREW LINTOTT

Violence, Civil Strife and Revolution in the Classical City
286pp. Croom Helm. £14.95. 0 859 16051

First, appropriately enough, some statistics. Geoffrey de Ste Croix's *magnum opus*, now published in paperback, contains over seven hundred closely printed pages, and weighs, in the hard-cover edition, more than three pounds. The notes alone run to some 107,000 words, and the total word-count is not far short of half a million. As a development of what began as three J. H. Gray lectures, this represents inflation on a truly monumental scale. At first sight only the appendices show restraint: four in thirty-three pages, where *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* had forty-seven in 109. Closer inspection, however, reveals other economies. The *Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* finds room for little more than twenty pages on the archaic and classical periods, from Hesiod to Alexander the Great (though incidental allusions occur elsewhere); the rest is divided between the Hellenistic kingdoms and Roman imperialism, with a bloated preliminary excursus on "proper Marxist" definitions (not always Marx's) of class and the class struggle and cognate matters, plus a drawn-out coda describing the fall of the Roman empire in terms of class-exploitation.

The book comes bound in the appropriate liturgical colour ("red for the Festivals of the Apostles and the Martyrs, who shed their blood for the Faith out of love for the Redeemer"), and adorned with a symbolic icon. Van Gogh's "The Potato Eaters", reproduced in the authentic sickly-green tones of want and despair.

Several of these features are instantly disturbing. At the risk of being relegated by Ste Croix to that storage-chamber of bourgeois colleagues who (by his account) reacted to each successive phase of his work, circulated in draft, with shock, obtuseness and predictable capitalist cliché, I think it is important to ask ourselves why. The Van Gogh frontispiece is a good starting-point. "These", Ste Croix tells us, "are the voiceless toilers, the great majority... of the Greek and Roman world... and so on. In fact they are nothing of the sort, and Ste Croix's correlation between the ancient and modern worlds remains at best, disingenuous. Eating potatoes and drinking coffee (to get which, at affordable prices, they did some indirect exploitation of their own), these northern Dutch labourers, multinational victims of the Industrial Revolution, have little in common with the peasant of the Hellenistic *chora*, and even less with the *thes or zeugites* of Africa. The obvious question is why Ste Croix did not utilize a genuine icon from antiquity. His answer would doubtless be: because no suitable icon existed. The operative word here is *available*. In fact, since he includes the Roman Empire in his survey, Ste Croix had an ideal – indeed, unique – work to hand in the great agricultural mosaics from Cherrchil (Caesarea) in North Africa, praised by Bianchi Bandinelli (himself a Marxist) for their "easy realistic accuracy". The trouble, of course, is that not only are the workers working (rather than sitting about indoors as deprived consumers), but looking healthy, if not happy, and actively involved in their work. Better, clearly, an irrelevant icon that produces the correct emotional effect. The end justifies the means.

It is also symptomatic that in a book potentially consecrated to the Greek peasant, Ste Croix repeatedly, and with justice, stresses the primacy of the agricultural surplus and the exploitation of man by man. However, since exploitation remains

use whatsoever is made of the rich comparative material assembled in recent years by Mediterranean anthropologists: Peter Walcott's *Greek Peasants, Ancient and Modern* (1970) is conspicuously absent from Ste Croix's vast bibliography, along with the related work of scholars such as Campbell, Friedl, Sanders and Peristiany. The continuous emphasis on theory (Ste Croix is contemptuous of scholars who do not work from a *priori* models) lends an unexpectedly arid tone even to the deployment of specific literary sources – in which area, it must be said, this book exhibits a truly formidable breadth and expertise. Worse, the suspicion arises that Ste Croix's offhand treatment of the three most vital centuries in Greek history is dictated not so much by a shortage of evidence – Andrew Lintott's scrupulously documented *Violence, Civil Strife and Revolution in the Classical City* would alone suffice to demonstrate Ste Croix's general thesis of class-exploitation. Like the Fat Boy in Dickens, he wants to make out (bourgeois) flesh creep; and for this purpose the habits of Ptolemies, or a *fortiori*, Roman provincial administrators, are more to the point than the stubborn, outspoken and ultimately self-defeating egalitarianism of the post-Periclean Athenian Assembly. Even so, an account of the Greek class struggle which devotes no more than a short paragraph to the Thirty Tyrants glosses over Thucydides' lethal account of *stasis* on Corcyra and makes no reference at all (among other interesting omissions) to Melos, Hesiod's fable of the Hawk and the Nightingale, or that fascinating if unsavoury right-wing intellectual *kyklos*, Critias, might be thought, to say the least, something more than idiosyncratically lopsided.

To find possible ideological motivation for what might otherwise seem mere perverse eccentricity, we need to take a very careful look in the first instance at Ste Croix's definitions and application of those elusive concepts "class" and "class struggle". Normally he is not at all shy about second-guessing, or improving, either accepted Marxist or, indeed, traditional Christian tenets: in both cases he displays an arrogant confidence – indeed with the caveats of mock-humility – that his version of the Founder's creed comes closer to the *Ur-truth* than the institutionalized and corrupt public dogma which ousted it. (I suspect that few things would annoy him more than being accused of anti-Christianity: his own version of Christ seems to be, as one might expect, about midway between Brock's and Pier Paolo Pasolini's.) Other critics have noted his avoidance of any Russian, East German and Italian Marxist sources: I suspect an implicit judgment here on his part. On the other hand, perversely, he hampers his definition of "class struggle" almost past belief by a determination to reconcile it with the opening sentence of *The Communist Manifesto*. Hedging carefully (for reasons that will emerge below) he writes at one point: "A class (a particular class) is a group of persons in a community identified by their position in the whole system of social production, defined above all according to their relationship (primarily in terms of the degree of ownership or control) to the conditions of production (that is to say, the means and labour of production) and to other classes."

Conventional, if nervous. But then Ste Croix later produces a second, and for him more important, definition: "class", he tells us, "is the collective social expression of the fact of exploitation", while "class struggle" is the "fundamental relationship between classes involving essentially exploitation, or resistance to it. Class, he concedes, is not the only category needed for analysis of Greek or Roman society, but it remains "the fundamental one, which over all... and in the long run is the most important." He seems to understand that there need be "no necessary connection between the existence of a surplus and the exploitation of man by man." However, since exploitation remains

for him (as for Marx) a fundamental constituent element in all transactions involving the employment of labour, rather than a frequent incidental attribute of such transactions – did he, I wonder, regard himself as exploited by New College during his teaching career there? – he is committed to discovering, throughout the ancient world, not only exploitation *tout court*, which would be easy enough, but class exploitation, quite another matter.

To complicate the situation still further, though no one would doubt Marx's preoccupation with the class struggle (in an 1868 letter to Engels he described it as the thing into which "the movement of the whole *Scheit* is resolved"), he never formally defined it, while in his crucial *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859-59) he did no more than glance at the problem of class, and made no reference at all (because of Prussian censorship, it has been argued) to the class struggle. Nothing daunted, Ste Croix hammers out his own definition, reassuring us that it would have been "not very different from the one I have given". (No danger, if the militant atheists are right, of Marx's ghost rising from Highgate Cemetery to correct him, though some of us might have relished the exchange.) As Bernard Knox says, there is something verging on the metaphysical about the term "class struggle" being used for (in Ste Croix's own words) "situations in which there may be no explicit common awareness of class on either side, no specifically political struggle at all, and perhaps even little consciousness of struggle of any kind". Some Marxists, as Ste Croix well knows, insist on class-consciousness and active political conflict as essential ingredients in any definition (a view with which I have some sympathy). But to do this, he argues, "makes nonsense not merely of *The Communist Manifesto* but of the greater part of Marx's work" – a consideration which, as a Knox admirer, I observe, "will have more force in some quarters than in others".

It also (perhaps more seriously) puts severe limitations on anyone attempting to interpret the ancient world in Marxist terms. Both Ste Croix and Lintott correctly dismiss as moonshine earlier attempts by Ure and Wason, or a favoured Stalinist such as George Thomson, to posit a powerful *class* of merchant-princes, a *Kaufmanns Aristokratie* between the old nobility and the *demos*. (Ste Croix's notion of Solon and Plato trading only to pay for their tourism goes, perhaps, too far in the other direction.) What they do not ask themselves is why such a theory should have arisen in the first place. The truth of the matter is that in a class struggle it takes two to tangle; and the kind of *stasis* for which evidence exists in archaic Greece has proved singularly resistant to Marxist analysis. There was no labour market in the modern sense; indeed, as Lintott observes, there was not even "a separate sector of economic activity, in which men could confront one another as employers and employees". The free poor – smallholders, as a class, outnumbered by far not only those landed aristocrats who would qualify, in Marxist formulae, as appropriators of labour (and the surplus that it produced), but also, at least till well on in the fifth century bc, and possibly longer, the slave population. Their chief aim moreover, was not, as Lintott says, "to improve the conditions for selling their labour but to avoid the kind of labour altogether", so that we are faced with the paradox of a state which, far from eyeing towards the subjection of its producing class, instead used democratization as a weapon for freeing that class from its would-be exploiters.

Where, then, was the class struggle? Small wonder that Ure and Thomson chose to retroject a group of hard-fisted proto-industrialists into this pre-industrial situation – the only way (as they saw it) in which orthodox Marxism could extrapolate a class conflict... from such regrettably material, Ste Croix who has far greater respect for awkward facts, salvages what he can from the mess by

simply arguing, without stressing comparative figures, that the land-owning class appropriated its surplus by exploiting unfree labour (never mind that this phenomenon represented only a small percentage of the total turnover in archaic Greece); that in certain circumstances the free producers could be indirectly exploited themselves; and that therefore, though Greek and Roman civilization was not technically a slave economy, he would not "raise any strong objection if anyone else wished to use that expression". At this point non-ideologues may find their patience wearing a little thin.

The whole concept of slavery, indeed, raises thorny and controversial issues that can hardly fail to embarrass any orthodox Marxist. Whether "orthodox" is an apt label for Ste Croix I rather doubt (though I'm quite sure he would think so, having a rare knack for treating all Marxists who disagree with him as mere misguided heretics); but the embarrassment is palpable. Discussing the short supply of free hired labour, and the availability of cheap slaves, he asserts: "I do believe that slavery increased the surplus in the hands of the propertied class to an extent which could not otherwise have been achieved and was therefore an essential precondition [italics mine] of the magnificent achievement of Classical civilisation." This is tendentious to a degree: it gets its effect, not only by treating a minority as a monopoly, but by carefully fudging a crucial time-sequence. The expansion of slavery at the expense of free labour was an undoubted fact (Solon's reforms being the original factor that set the long-term process in motion), but its full impact was not felt until the Periclean age was over, and that age's achievement fixed for all hence classic conceptual holdall. While Marx's concept of the class struggle was (as Ste Croix admits in his

Athens: in the ordinary way he is only too eager to find excuses for any manifestation of Athenian imperial hubris.)

In any case the status of slave remains, for a Marxist, full of inconsistencies. They frequently turned up in managerial roles, as bankers or businessmen (even, as Ernst Badian has pointed out, themselves owning slaves), in which capacity they functioned as large-scale producers and consumers rather than as sources of exploitation. Ste Croix is, understandably, shy of servile success-stories; he does not enlarge on the Athenian millionaire-banker Pasion, and he regards Trimalchio as a mere grotesque fiction. What seems clear is that in Greece no less than Rome a slave's degree of freedom, and indeed his relation to the means of production, could vary very considerably. The Old Oligarch complained that in Athens it was impossible, on the street, to tell a slave from a free man, and this fact is of more than merely social importance. At the other end of the scale Ste Croix, surprisingly, challenges the notion that slavery was a factor holding up technological development. Such a dedicated gadfly of institutionalized Christianity can hardly have failed to notice that strong moral objections to slavery only emerged when the Industrial Revolution offered a cheap substitute for the "unimproved tool" (thus proving, in an unexpected way, Aristotle's argument about total automation as the only viable alternative to slavery).

What Ste Croix prefers to stress is "exploitation as the hallmark of class", "exploitation" being – a point not lost on Ste Croix's Weimarian biographer Moses Finley – a usefully vague, and until the Periclean age was over, and that age's achievement fixed for all hence classic conceptual holdall. While Marx's concept of the class struggle was (as Ste Croix admits in his

The right to privacy

Lord Scarman

POLYVIOS G. POLYVIOS

Search and Seizure: Constitutional and Common Law
391pp. Duckworth. £35. 0 7156 1592 0

This book is more than a careful, scholarly work of legal research, though it is certainly that. It is a comparative study of contrasting developments in American and English law in that sensitive area where the need to enforce the criminal law comes into collision with the civilized requirement that the law must respect and protect the individual's human and property rights.

It is broadly true that the modern American and English law of civil rights is derived from the common law of England as it stood in the time of Blackstone. His *Commentaries on the Laws of England* were first published in 1765. His investigation of "the elements of the law and the grounds of our civil polity" made a deep impression on the very intelligent lawyers who after the Declaration of Independence set about the task of embodying the basic principles of the common law and the "grounds of our civil polity" in the American Constitution. The Bill of Rights introduced by way of amendment to the Constitution, was seen as the embodiment of those principles as the common law which the English parliamentarians and common lawyers had striven to secure from the Crown in the seventeenth century and which the American colonists were determined to protect as their birthright against the encroachment of royal authority in the eighteenth century.

The specific topic Polyvios G. Polyvios has chosen is "search and seizure", and his specific task is to analyse the differences which now exist between the respective approaches of

the modern American and English legal systems. He is a bold author. He criticizes judicial developments in both systems, exposes what he believes to be their weaknesses, and, prying in aid the case law of Scotland, Ireland, Canada and Australia, offers some constructive ideas for the improvement of the law. I am not sure whether he advocates reform by legislation or "improved" judicial decisions. He is quite bold enough to suggest either or both as the way forward.

Polyvios takes his title from the Fourth Amendment of the American Constitution, which reads as follows:

"The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

There is no doubt that this Amendment was intended to embody the safeguards of the common law. And the common law model for the amendment was the classic judgment of Lord Camden in *Entick v Carrington* (1765) 19 State Trials 1031.

Both systems of law, English and American, stem from this one root. Why then is the modern American law so different in certain important respects from the modern English law? The answer given by Polyvios is that the Americans elevated the right of people "to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects" to the heights of constitutional principle. It was, however, only gradually that the American Supreme Court came to flex its muscles and feel its strength as the guardian and interpreter of the Constitution. Polyvios reminds us that for almost a century after its adoption the Fourth Amendment hardly ever came before the Supreme Court. But when it did, in the famous case of *Bridg v United States* 116 US 616 (1886), the

Court was very conscious of its role as the interpreter of the Constitution. It took hold of *Entick's* case, which was based on the law of trespass to person, property and goods, and transformed it so as to apply not merely to such "adventitious circumstances" as the breaking of doors and the rummaging of drawers but to "all invasions on the part of the government and its employees of the sanctity of a man's home and the privacies of life". In 1967 the Supreme Court adopted and developed this approach. Refusing to limit the protection of the Fourth Amendment to "physical intrusion" into a "constitutionally protected area", the Court declared that the amendment "protects people, not places".

Polyvios traces this significant development with great skill and contrasts it with the modern English law, where the judges have retained the physical character of the searches and seizures against which the law offers protection. In both systems the development of the law has been by judicial decision. The American judges have reached for the sky and developed a broad principle in tune with modern aspirations for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. But the English judges have shown themselves cautious, pragmatic, content to advance step by step, leaving Parliament to legislate. If it should think fit, for anything more ambitious. The difference is between judges who have the Constitution in their hands and judges who have to accept Parliament as sovereign. The American Supreme Court can invalidate legislation as unconstitutional. English judges are under a constitutional duty to obey the legislative will of Parliament. This, the Polyvios demonstrates, is the fundamental reason for the difference between the two systems of judgment.

He spells out this difference of approach with other examples, which

make fascinating reading. In particular, he shows how American courts accept the challenge of developing a broad principle to meet the problem posed by the need for stop-and-search methods to combat street crime. American judges have developed a case law which, while recognizing the need for what they call "stop and frisk", seeks to limit it to situations where it is reasonable to suppose that it is necessary either as a safety precaution or for the prevention of crime. The English judges, although always prepared to support action necessary to preserve the public peace, have shown themselves reluctant to allow stop-and-search procedures unless authorized by statute.

Polyvios also explores the interesting and – I would think – valuable possibility that the judges, English as well as American, may develop a concept of lawful detention without the necessity of arrest. In England the concept already exists: for instance, in the Prevention of Terrorism legislation. If it were to be treated as a "seizure" and subjected to the safeguards common to both systems of law which are reflected in the Fourth Amendment, the individual could be afforded the necessary protection in a world in which it is sometimes vital in the war against crime for police officers to have the right to detain persons for interrogation without having to go to the lengths of arresting them.

The book ends with a valuable and interesting chapter headed "Concluding Comments". The author sees the weakness of both American and English law their lack of an effective remedial response to the gathering of evidence by unlawful searches and seizures. Here the contrast between the two systems is stark and complete. Under American law, evidence obtained illegally is not admissible in criminal proceedings. The consequence is, as Chief Justice Burger has forcefully pointed out, that guilty men escape notwithstanding the existence of evidence of their guilt.

Under English law, subject to certain safeguards in respect of admissions, confessions, all relevant evidence is admissible, whether legally or illegally obtained; but the judge retains a discretion to exclude evidence, if it should think its reception would prejudice the chance of a fair trial. Polyvios does not like the English approach; nor can he stomach the consequences of the American approach. He believes that the Australian courts may have found a way out of the difficulty by requiring the judge to admit evidence legally obtained only if the interest of effective enforcement of the criminal law outweighs the interest of protecting human and property rights of those who are subjected to the unlawful search and seizure.

Polyvios makes a strong case against the American principle. But I doubt whether the Australian rule is as good as that which has been accepted by English law. Under English law the judge has a discretion which is strictly judicial in character. He will not allow in his opinion that evidence would create an unacceptable risk to a fair trial.

But Polyvios clearly doubts whether acquitting a guilty man is the appropriate way of seeking to compel the police to obey the law in their search for evidence. Other remedies should surely be sought. The Chief Justice of the United States has suggested a civil right of action for damages to be given to the victim of unlawful search or seizure. And there is another possibility – effective disciplinary action independently administered.

Mr Polyvios's work is a notable contribution to our knowledge of a difficult and vitally important branch of the law. Those of us whose business it is with the law will find it invaluable. The general reader, though, he may find it hard going, will, he says, yield to its fascination and learn much about law and society.

and general significance. This is understandable, but it is a matter of regret. Many years of research by scholars from several disciplines will be necessary before the time will be ripe for a full-scale intellectual biography. Yet one wonders whether Hart has perhaps been over-cautious – at least until now – in not stepping back and taking a broader view of his subject.

Nevertheless, this is an important book. It contains an authoritative and extraordinarily patient interpretation of some key aspects of Bentham's thought. It is also a courageous exploration of the relationship between our greatest contemporary legal philosopher and his predecessor, Hart epitomizes the deep ambivalence of most Bentham scholars towards their subject. Unlike students of Marx, few Benthamists are committed Benthamites. Hart is a moved utilitarian, an unrepentant positivist and a disciple of Bentham who finds some of his main inspiration in what he sees as crucial illuminating errors of his predecessor. In the best tradition of serious criticism, this book adds significantly to our understanding of both the author and his subject.

fatal flaw in his theory of law, yet buried in that idea is the notion of "a content-independent peremptory reason for action" which is a requisite for understanding legal authority and law-making. Much of the ground covered in this book will be familiar to students of Jurisprudence. However, the author takes the opportunity to restate and occasionally to modify his own position on a number of issues. He admits to a few second thoughts (for example, on pages 122 and 138), he makes some minor concessions to his critics, but he also forcefully defends his central views against Dworkin and others. Hart writes with his usual elegance and clarity, but this is not an easy book. It provides ample support for the claim that careful elucidation of important concepts can throw light on much else besides. It provides one more refutation of the notion that this kind of approach is trivial or sterile or narrow-minded. But it does make considerable demands on both the patience and the intelligence of the reader. The focus is largely limited to particular passages, without any attempt at a comprehensive overview of Bentham's intellectual development

Power to command

William Twining

H. L. A. HART

Essays on Jurisprudence: Studies in Jurisprudence and Political Theory
72pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £15 (paperback, £4.95). 0 19 825348 6

Bentham studies have recently gathered momentum. Eight volumes of the *Collected Works* have been published and about a dozen more are due to appear in the next few years. Recent monographs by Balme, Hume, Long and Steinberger may be the forerunners of a flood of specialized works. A *Bentham Newsletter* has been established, conferences and seminars have been held and an international network of Bentham scholars has begun to emerge.

No one has contributed more to these developments than Herbert Hart. His inaugural lecture at Oxford in 1953 started both the revival of legal philosophy in England and the process of re-establishing Bentham as our leading jurist. With James Burns he

undertook the exhausting task of editing three key volumes in the *Collected Works* – *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, *Of Laws in General and A Comment on the Commentaries* and *A Fragment on Government*. The first of these has just been reissued in a paperback edition with a substantial introduction by Hart. It has been a conspicuously successful Chairman of the Bentham Committee and he is the most authoritative commentator on and critic of Bentham's jurisprudence.

Essays on Bentham brings together most, but not all, of Hart's work in this area. It is much more than a convenient collection of already published essays. Five of the chapters are substantially unchanged versions of earlier publications, including the elegant Chorley Lecture on "The Demystification of the Law". The engaging account of Bentham's shifts in attitudes towards the United States and his illuminating analysis of his similar ambivalence towards Beccaria. Four more chapters draw on, but go beyond, previously published material. The introduction and the last chapter are substantially new. The whole is skillfully integrated to present

a sustained critique of Bentham's jurisprudence and a spirited defence of some central aspects of Hart's own views.

The first four essays deal with matters of quite general interest. The last six are more specialized studies in analytical jurisprudence, though at points where it overlaps with political and moral philosophy. Hart is careful to sketch the historical context of Bentham's concerns, but his approach is predominantly analytical. The main connecting thread of the book is an elucidation and critique of Bentham's treatment of some fundamental concepts: fictions, fallacies, natural rights, liberty, law (and a law), legal duty, legal rights, legal powers, sovereignty and command. A central theme is that Bentham's imperative theory is distorted by his choice of some key concepts – in particular the notion of command – and that he attempts to escape from the resulting difficulties were largely unsuccessful. Yet the errors involved are sufficiently illuminating to constitute, in the words of J. L. Austin, "one form of philosophical genius". Hart's main conclusion is that Bentham's emphasis on the notion of command represents a

Downtreading the demos

Peter Green

simply arguing, without stressing comparative figures, that the land-owning class appropriated its surplus by exploiting unfree labour (never mind that this phenomenon represented only a small percentage of the total turnover in archaic Greece); that in certain circumstances the free producers could be indirectly exploited themselves; and that therefore, though Greek and Roman civilization was not technically a slave economy, he would not "raise any strong objection if anyone else wished to use that expression". At this point non-ideologues may find their patience wearing a little thin.

The whole concept of slavery, indeed, raises thorny and controversial issues that can hardly fail to embarrass any orthodox Marxist. Whether "orthodox" is an apt label for Ste Croix I rather doubt (though I'm quite sure he would think so, having a rare knack for treating all Marxists who disagree with him as mere misguided heretics); but the embarrassment is palpable. Discussing the short supply of free hired labour, and the availability of cheap slaves, he asserts: "I do believe that slavery increased the surplus in the hands of the propertied class to an extent which could not otherwise have been achieved and was therefore an essential precondition [italics mine] of the magnificent achievement of Classical civilisation." This is tendentious to a degree: it gets its effect, not only by treating a minority as a monopoly, but by carefully fudging a crucial time-sequence. The expansion of slavery at the expense of free labour was an undoubted fact (Solon's reforms being the original factor that set the long-term process in motion), but its full impact was not felt until the Periclean age was over, and that age's achievement fixed for all hence classic conceptual holdall. While Marx's concept of the class struggle was (as Ste Croix admits in his

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Rewarding usefully

J. A. Guy

LINDA LEVY PECK

Northampton: Patronage and Policy at the Court of James I
277pp. Allen and Unwin. £18.50.
0 04 942177 8

The reign of James I is under scrutiny again. For too long this king has been the victim of literary pastiche, deployed as a foil to the fleeting glory of the overrated Elizabeth I. And within that traditional drama, Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, plays villain. Leader of a consistently reactionary faction, Northampton epitomized corruption, favoured Catholic Spain, thwarted reform, and deliberately wrecked the Parliament of 1614 – so the story goes.

Linda Peck has re-examined the documents, and her task is to rehabilitate Northampton. She sometimes overstates her case, but the overall picture is convincing. Northampton's career is also harnessed to provide an insider's view of Jacobean politics and methods (though no wider analysis of the Court is attempted, despite the book's title), and this survey, too, is valuable.

Northampton was not corrupt by contemporary standards, and he did not advance Spanish interests to the prejudice of English ones. As an administrator he was conscientious, hard-working and constructive – hardly brilliant, but an essential prop of Salisbury's system, whatever personal differences existed between them. He backed Salisbury in the Privy Council and Star Chamber, and painstakingly attended to details of royal finance, the investigation of projects and the management of Parliament in England and Ireland. He supported the Great Contract despite private doubts; he introduced Cranfield into government service. Yet we should not get carried away when he assumed command of the Privy Council on Salisbury's death. Northampton exasperated James by his failure to provide swift, incisive advice on major policy issues, a weakness compounded by feeble attempts to shift the blame.

Northampton stressed the need for service in exchange for reward, even voicing merit as a touchstone of promotion. As Warden of the Cinque Ports, Lord Privy Seal and a Norfolk magnate, he spun a network of patronage that emulated Tudor patterns. He saw that the baronetage had political as well as fiscal utility; it deployed to cement Court-Country relations. But how extensive was Northampton's patronage? Here Dr Peck is in difficulty, because her sources do not permit systematic analysis of the influence of privy councillors over royal patronage. James's bounty in England, as in Scotland, was increasingly administered by intermediaries. This tells against a monarch incapable of handling the conflicting claims of suitors or courtiers. But until Northampton's function as broker is clarified, we cannot adequately evaluate his role as a courtier. Peck does, however, establish that Northampton, who remained a private Catholic, did not attempt to influence ecclesiastical appointments.

The Jacobean dilemma was that while court patronage was the key to the control of administration, it was also the inexorable motor of corruption. Northampton wielded reform as the means to maintain stability, tackling corruption in the navy, the heralds' office and in the system of purveyance. He probed the Irish revenues, and salvaged the Earl Marshall's court. His goals were enhanced efficiency, accountability, improved services and the curtailment of unnecessary offices and fees. He opposed projects oppressive to the subject, believing that financial reform should balance the interests of Crown, subjects and contractors. His reforming zeal was genuine; it was not "spite" or a cloak for ambition. Yet Northampton failed as a reformer. Despite having Cranfield and Sir Robert Cotton in his private "think-tank", he lacked the vision and grip on events – and probably the influence at Court – to confound vested interests. He had his

own profit to consider, too. For instance, his starch patent yielded £15,750 in six years (mostly massive compensation for its abolition). If Northampton ever wanted to reform the British starch industry, his motives were scarcely altruistic.

His role in Parliament was to sit on innumerable committees and monitor private bills on behalf of Salisbury and the Privy Council. He also served as a principal Crown spokesman and manager, addressing union with Scotland, merchant grievances and early stages of the Great Contract. Willing to consult and even conciliate, Northampton was eager to prepare sessions so that both members and the Crown could secure their ends – the redress of grievances and supply. His efforts throughout were solid and respectable, though his rhetoric was obtrusive. Above all, he did not conspire to wreck the Addled Parliament. He disagreed with, and had already lost power to, Suffolk and Somerset. He did not attend this Parliament or its committees. Moreover, James had moved towards dissolution before Hoskyns's speech on June 3. Northampton had resisted calling Parliament; he had repudiated the undertakers. But the Addled Parliament collapsed because of discord between the Houses over impositions, and because James dissolved it falling immediate supply.

Factions and patron-client-relationships were fluid at the Jacobean Court – there was no automatic impulse. Northampton's career illustrates this neatly, but it also opens Pandora's box, because it implicitly denies that an authoritative view of James's reign will spring from the factional politics of the day, rather than from the king's own inabilities.

Surveying complacently

C. S. L. Davies

SIR THOMAS SMITH

De Republica Anglorum
Edited by Mary Dewar
162pp. Cambridge University Press.
£19.50
0 521 24109 X

Sir Thomas Smith's career – small farmer's son to Secretary of State – is one of the success stories of Tudor politics. Cambridge undergraduate at thirteen, Regius Professor of Civil Law at twenty-six, Vice-Chancellor at thirty, he left academic life for the service of Protector Somerset, becoming clerk to the Privy Council, then, briefly, Secretary of State in 1549. After several years in the political wilderness, he was ambassador to France 1562-66 and 1571-72, and Secretary of State once more from 1572 to 1576. He wrote the *De Republica* during his first embassy, ostensibly, at least, for the edification of the benighted foreigner. Posthumously published in 1583, it ran through several editions by 1640, and was translated into Dutch in 1673, and German in 1688. In modern times it has been an indispensable source for anthologies of Elizabethan life.

While Smith had firsthand experience of some of the murkier aspects of Tudor politics (he stuck by Somerset just a little too long during the coup of 1549 and spent four months in the Tower), anybody expecting an insider's account would be disappointed. No Tudor politician would have dreamed of titillating the "rascal multitude" with the inside story, and the *De Republica* is even less enlightening about political realities than Herbert Morrison's *Government and Parliament*. Smith was an insufferable pedant, ever ready for a disquisition on etymology and an excursion into ancient history (he was, after all, the author of a treatise on the wages of a Roman foot-soldier). Fortunately he abandoned his initial attempt to fit Aristotelian institutions into the taxonomy of Aristotle's *Politics*; not, however, until he has taken us in

Felling James's resolve, his privy councillors had to balance the merits of reform against those of bawling away royal prerogative in return for income. Salisbury and Northampton agreed that the Great Contract's demise formed a landmark: the recourse would be to the prerogative and fiscal feudalism. (Eliasmere ordered his advisers to transcribe Edmund Dudley's notebooks in the wake of the Addled Parliament.) But Northampton perceived that the Great Contract had always been inadequate. Administration were becoming insoluble, certainly by courtiers. Tudor stability had bred instability through structural decay. Yet if Elizabeth I had done things by halves, James I did virtually nothing.

We do not want to the rehabilitated Northampton, who had trampled on Lord Cobham and Sir Walter Raleigh, and engineered the scandalous Essex divorce. He even turned his religion to advantage, for as a Catholic who compromised his faith in order to hold office, part of his value to James was precisely his willingness to forward any government cause, albeit against papal authority or English Catholics. Compared to Northampton, Salisbury was more innovative, Cranfield more systematic. Hard work alone could not bring success, especially when it failed to spot the consequences of the Cockayne project – Thomas Cromwell, to whom Peck refers in her closing pages, had consigned a similar proposal to instant oblivion.

Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, remains pompous, heavy-footed, dangerous and baroque. By contrast Linda Peck's study is meticulous, subtle, informative and elegantly proportioned. She has made a splendid historiographical debut.

Aristotelian fashion through the origins of the household and of the state.

The description of English institutions in Book Two begins reasonably, not with the monarch, but with Parliament: "the most high and absolute power of the realm of England, is in the Parliament." This is not, as Mary Dewar hastens to point out, a prophetic affirmation of the power of the two houses against the Crown. Parliament includes the Crown, and the initiative in the body politic remained decisively in the head. But Smith's assertion is a striking one. He is firm in arguing that the "consent" of Parliament is necessary for law, and that England is thereby distinguished from an absolute monarchy. So King Pope was "forthwith and ever sithens taken for nothing" because it was "neither approved of his people, nor accorded by act of parliament." Smith is valuable on Parliamentary procedure, though no doubt much too bland about what really happened. Revealingly, there is nothing at all about elections, except for the well-known but question-begging aphorism that "everie Englishman is entended to bee there present, either in person or by procurator", and so, "the consent of the Parliament is taken to be everie mans consent".

Most of the book is taken up with a description of the workings of the law-courts. Smith never attended an Inn of Court, though both as JP and statesman he had considerable experience of the practicalities of the law. Disappointingly, he does not produce the systematic comparison of English and Roman Law which could have been expected of a Regius Professor. Nor, in 1565, is there much sign of that critical acumen which he had shown in writing the *Discourse of the Common Weal* in 1549. The major issues are blandly ignored. No one would guess from his brief description of the action to be taken when one of the parties to a suit does not appear, that this was a common failing: "a main reason why cases took so long to reach resolution, if they ever did. Smith can maintain with a straight face that 'the rich hath more advantage therein than the poore', and, most notoriously,

Climbing hopefully

Kevin Sharpe

NICHOLAS CANNY

The Upstart Earl: A study of the social and mental world of Richard Boyle, first Earl of Cork, 1566-1643
211pp. Cambridge University Press.
£18.50
0 521 24416 1

Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork, was the most famous and successful of the English adventurers in Ireland in the early seventeenth century. From obscure and humble origins, he left England in his early twenties in 1588 to seek his fortune in Ireland. Through exploitation of his office as deputy escheator of crown lands, and a fair measure of sharp practice, he acquired a substantial estate. Subsequently, the pains he took to strengthen his title and to improve his rents brought Boyle a massive income – by the 1630s over £20,000 per annum. With land and wealth came recognition and title; and in 1620 the Earl of Cork. But fame and success also attracted envy and enmity. To his detractors Boyle typified the parvenu, hoisted above his station to a sham honour built on ill-gotten gains of a career spent cozening Church and Crown.

Nicholas Canny argues convincingly that in evaluating Boyle historians have too uncritically followed the slanders of his enemies, most notably Sir Thomas Wentworth. Drawing on Boyle's own papers, Canny sets out to comprehend not to condemn his subject, to understand, that is, how Boyle perceived his own position and the role of the New English in Ireland. Canny eschews straightforward biography to examine, in a series of

categorically deny the use of torture in England.

Reading between the lines, one discovers a rather less complacent Smith. He does admit the existence of "bustle heads and lovers of trouble" who "gain by process, and waxe fatte by the expence of and trouble of other". He presents the arguments against the English practice of wardship strongly (some might think it "contrarie to nature, that a Freeman and Gentleman should be bought and sold like a horse or an ox"), countering only with an explanation based on obsolete military needs. And he does, without naming names, allude to the case "not in the reign of the Queens now" (in fact the Throckmorton's case in Queen Mary's reign) when a jury which returned a not-guilty verdict in a treason trial was imprisoned and swingingly fined.

Smith's work, uncritical as it may be, is an indispensable guide to the workings of the Tudor legal system, and also a source for established attitudes. Mary Dewar produced an excellent life of Smith in 1964. Her new edition of the *De Republica* replaces Leonard Alston's of 1906. Alston's was based on the posthumous printed version of 1583; though he noted major variations in the two manuscripts then known. Four more complete manuscripts were available to Dr Dewar, and she has worked from them to reconstruct the probable text of Smith's own missing 1565 manuscript; since the 1583 printing did little to update the matter of the text, and sometimes mutilated Smith's sense, the restoration is welcome. Dr Dewar has also unravelled an old puzzle; the relationship between Smith's text and that of his Essex neighbour William Harrison, whose "Of degrees of People in the Commonwealth of England" is nearly identical with chapters 17-24 of Smith's first book. Smith and Harrison read each other in manuscript in apparently friendly co-operation. It is appropriate that they both contributed to the celebrated definition of the English gentleman: "Whosoever... will beare the port charge and countenance of a gentleman, he shall be reputed for a Gentleman". "The rich hath more advantage therein than the poore", and, most notoriously,

essays, aspects of Boyle's world. The fullest and best of these deal with his social ambitions and his family life.

In the next chapter, we see that for all his success Boyle epitomized the sense of displacement felt by the English who rose to wealth and title in Ireland. Achievements in Ireland he looked perhaps, only in so far as they looked his ultimate social advancement in England. If Boyle became Lord Treasurer and continued to pursue the Lord Deputyship it was primarily as the ordered office and recognition at home. With no skilful use of the evidence, Canny captures nicely the insecurity and ambition of the man who almost sought out news of the latest fashion, who modelled his mansion and indeed his manners, often in contradiction to his private inclination, to avoid the English taste. But the quest to emulate (and purchase) recognition in England was lengthy and hazardous. Boyle lacked pedigree, kin and a patron among the Old English in the colony; he had no broker at the English court, his eventual success (appointment to the English Privy Council) in 1640 was the principal investment – of his sons and daughters in carefully arranged marriages.

As a father Boyle was authoritarian and patriarchal. He expected and secured obedience and respect. While taking pains for the education of his sons he appeared to have treated his daughters as marketable commodities to be contracted at an early age for the most beneficial return. Yet further study of the Earl of Cork's papers does not, as Canny makes clear, bear out this model of the early modern patriarchal family advanced recently. Boyle was mischievously affectionate to his children and clearly cared for them as individuals. (How could anyone believe that there was a period in history when, as a rule, parents did not?) Nor was his a nuclear family; grandparents and, in his later life, the older married children with their offspring lived within the Boyle household. Canny valuably questions over-simplified generalizations about family history. He argues, suitably, "the need for further studies of particular family experiences before we seek to draw any final conclusions about general trends of patterns".

Less satisfactory are the brief essays on Boyle's place in and perception of the Anglo-Irish colonial experiment. However, with the years of peace after 1603, Boyle's growing sense of equity in Irish culture, his desire that his son learn Irish and his vision of the future civilization and development of the colony point to the potential emergence of a hybrid Anglo-Irish society. But the suggestions are not sufficiently pursued, nor are the various essays co-ordinated adequately to draw a map of Boyle's world or his own world-view. It is artificial to exclude discussion of his business interests and the building of his papers – the principal matter of his papers – and especially unfortunate given that Terence Ranger's earlier research remains largely unpublished.

Amidst tantalizingly allusive pointers, some important questions remain unanswered. Boyle's papers, we are told, reveal that for all his necessary adherence to the Church and Crown, his "well-concealed sympathies lay with parliament and the parliamentarians". But his "latent" parliamentarianism does not emerge in these pages. Does Boyle's growing involvement with Irish culture reflect a desire for integration or resignation to frustrated ambition? Was what (somehow loftily) depicted as Boyle's "spiritualized Machiavellianism" any more than the justification of self-interest? Perhaps these questions were never clear in Boyle's own mind; he very doubts and ambiguities may have been at the heart of the Anglo-Irish experience. If so, it would have been helpful had Canny brought them together in a conclusion.

With Canny as our guide, we are left up the rapid ascents and along the rocky trails of Boyle's Anglo-Irish career, but the landscape as a whole remains unfamiliar and the plot itself somewhat elusive. We must hope that Professor Canny continues to explore them.

An empiricist's encounter

Zachary Leader

PAUL FUSSELL

The Boy Scout Handbook and Other Observations
288pp. Oxford University Press.
£8.95
0 19 503102 4

"The only review I am anxious about," confesses Virginia Woolf, "is the one in the *Times Literary Supplement*: not that it will be the most intelligent, but it will be the most read and I can't bear people to see me doomed in public". Paul Fussell, who quotes this journal entry in his immensely enjoyable new collection of "essays and reviews and bagatelles" (some of which were in fact published in the *TLS*) is unlikely to be the first place, "no one is obliged to be an author. Every author is, in a sense, a reviewer" – a remark of special relevance to someone who publishes a collection mostly of reviews, even if all of them "have been reconsidered and rewritten". Second, what a review actually says is deemed less important than its length and location (often determined by an editor). Fussell quotes Johnson: "Fame is a shuttlecock. If it be struck at only one end of the room, it will soon fall to the ground. To keep it up it must be struck at both ends."

Fussell's fame derives principally from the profound and affecting *The Great War and Modern Memory*, and *Abroad* – the two most recent of his six earlier books. Many of the virtues of these books are to be found in his reviews, but reviews can only get so far. After a while one comes to his tricks and ticks, and the level on which they argue and explore. This collection gives real pleasure, but it shows the limitations of its form. It also makes Fussell's point about authors as show-offs.

The book's thirty-four articles are divided into five sections: "Americana" (including the title essay, a defence of the Boy Scout ethos as revealed in its 1979 *Handbook*), "Hazards of Literature", "Going Places", "Britons, Largely Eccentric", and "Versions of the Second World War", topics which clearly grow out of or feed interests in Fussell's earlier books on prosody, rhetoric and satire, and the life of writing (as in *Samuel Johnson and the Life of Writing*), as well as travel and war. Fussell's method is that of a common-sense empiricist, as he forthrightly declares in the book's Preface: "stand by the English empirical school", he quotes Herbert Read approvingly: "I feel their spirit in my very bones and everything new will for me be a development of that great tradition."

Hence Fussell's grounds for admiring William Carlos Williams, in whose writings he finds "successful encounters with the American local concrete". Or his disapproval of a strain in Whitman which is "at once vague, portentous, solemn, and pitiful". In the witty "Notes on Class" he relies "not on interviews, questionnaires, or any kind of quantitative technique, but on perhaps a more trustworthy method – perception". This "method" can, on occasion, slide into complacency, as when Fussell says of Latin America that "for anyone experienced with Europe, it is boring" (for a Latin American experienced with Europe?). Usually, though, it is sensibly qualified. In "Where Are the War Poets?", for example, Fussell quotes a critic and poet who is something of a kindred spirit: "The best poetry of the war, the most truthful and penetrating, was... rooted in the ground of physical experience." "With that tolerance," comments Fussell, "the British empiricist, the veteran, and the conservative coalesce, and if the critic makes us feel a little uneasy with a word like *truthful*, at least we sense that our guide is not going to snow us with deconstructionist cant."

If Fussell's essays are short and sharp with wit, they're rich in detailed observation and quotation. The assertion that Whitman "can make your flesh creep almost as often as it can make you smile" is accompanied by a single perfect quotation: "What is removed

drops horribly in a pail." The essential vulgarity of another author, Harry Crosby's wife Caresse, is caught in the title of her memoirs: *The Fastlane Years*. In "Notes on Class" Fussell singles out the words *acquisitive*, *despicable*, and *patina* as "secret class indicators" or "culture words", the marks of the socially aspiring; while elsewhere in the essay he divides society into "those who think *prestigious* a classy word and those who don't" ("classy", incidentally, a form of which Fussell later uses without irony, could serve a similar function). In a piece on Boswell, one of the book's "Britons, Largely Eccentric" (the others are Edward VII, Baron Corvo, Ivor Gurney, Rider Haggard, Somerset Maugham, and Evelyn Waugh), Fussell calls his subject "the sole inventor of the peculiarly contemporary exercise, 'the interview'", citing the following examples as typical: "If, Sir, you were shut up in a castle, and a newborn child with you, what would you do?" "Pray, sir, can you tell me why an apple is round and a pear pointed?" "When we were alone, I introduced the subject of death..."

David Trotter

MICHAEL HOLROYD (Editor)

Essays by Divers Hands: Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature
XLII
224pp. Boydell and Brewer. £8.95.
0 85115 1736

Michael Holroyd's introduction to *Essays by Divers Hands* suggests that although the hands may be as various as the work they are put to, they do have a common cause: dislike of academic criticism. "As it retreats further within the fortifications of our Universities," Holroyd writes, "literature is in danger of being diminished from providing part of our education in life to an education merely for exams." Several of his contributors seem to feel the same way. Some of them take issue with the approaches to literature favoured by the "new professorial priesthood", others would simply like to be rid of the whole mumbly, chant-sodden crew. To a reviewer idling on the academic battlements, the challenge is plain.

What do contemporary *belles-lettres* have to offer that academic criticism can't or won't? First of all, to judge by the essays in this collection, a willingness to think of literature in connection with non-literary forms of discourse. Robert Skidelsky writes about Keynes and Bloomsbury, Martin Gilbert about Churchill's literary stamina, Ronald Lewin about the problems of military biography. I don't suppose that there are many university courses on Modernist literature which include Keynes's *Economic Consequences of the Peace*. On the other hand, it is only fair to add that anyone interested in the implications of that book for contemporary criticism: to Ronald Bush's *The Genesis of Ezra Pound's Cantos*.

The second thing that *belles-lettres* may have to offer is an avoidance of self-serving sophistication. Julian Symonds avoids it, at any rate, in his cogent and informative essay on the art of biography. Symonds demonstrates convincingly the virtues of common sense, informed by a taste for intellectual adventure.

However, one might also conclude from the essays in this volume that *belles-lettres* are not always first by a belt of love of argument, by a desire to persuade rather than merely to assert or describe. Several potentially interesting ideas lapse because their authors do not think them through. MacLennan Merchant, for example, concentrates reasonably enough on the "reverberations" left in the minds of the audience by the endings of Shakespeare's plays; but he doesn't really substantiate his claim that these promptings constitute a "sixth act", an element of dramatic form.

Other ideas don't rise far enough to

Fussell's faith and interest in the objects of his perception – including people, places, things, books or "texts" ("a thing is literature if it's worth reading more than a couple of times for illumination or pleasure") – makes for the inclusion of awkward or inconvenient as well as pleasing details. Though Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading* is deemed a silly, pedantic, insignificant book, it is also shown to contain the occasional gem of metrical common sense, as in the reminder that "an iambic foot cannot be illustrated by a word unless that word is part of a specific iambic line". In "Smut-Hunting in Pretoria", South African censorship is revealed as richly stupid and illogical in its attitudes towards sex, but at the same time Fussell notes its prohibition of racist and antisemitic materials: "Items like the pamphlet *The Negro a Beast* issued by the South African Anglo-Nordic Union. The grossly anti-Semitic *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*... *This Time the World and White Power*, by the late American Nazi George Lincoln Rockwell."

This fidelity to "fact" goes with a penchant for homely or down-to-earth

explanation. The recent vogue for comparative literary studies in the United States, for example, Fussell attributes to the Second World War, with its influx of "numerous brilliant young people adept in more than one European language". It is a vague bound to pass, since these now aging adepts are unlikely to be replaced, "barring another flux". In a later article, he explains why editors of literary journals and periodicals like printing letters of complaint: "they get a lot of signed copy without having to pay for it. The principle has been thoroughly mastered by the publishers of sex magazines like *Forum*..." To eke out their free copy further, editors often try to cajole the original reviewer into composing an "answer" to the complaint.

The last and best piece in the collection, entitled "My War", goes some way towards explaining Fussell's critical habits and predilections; it also makes one impatient for his next book, a study "of the behaviour of the imagination in the Second World War". "The war made me a foot-soldier for the rest of my life", says

lapse. One of them provides the subject of Robert Conquest's "But what good came of it at last? An idea of apocalypse enables us to begin to make sense of the addition, and of the variety of work it has produced. Conquest's account of Modernism is not informed by an equivalent idea; all that it illustrates, therefore, is the range and intensity of his own dislikes. "Modernism" becomes a term not of analysis but of abuse. As Rebecca West said of a critic who (in 1912) had deployed "romanticist" to similar effect, "it would be much more vigorous to use some plain English term that we can all understand, such as 'blighter'".

Kermode's essay was in part a critique of an earlier non-academic "fiction" on "Modernism": Cyril Connolly's *The Movement*. Both belittlers seem to prefer assertion to argument.

As all objectives were gained and the complacent hypocrisy of the

Love in a Valley

(Valkyrie's Valspenk in Awesome Vailhalla)

I useta think Wotan was vicious
in all that gear, a real soc, a mega hunk

We flew high, a bitchen sesh,
it was radicial

Those pointy things on his helmet
were truly gnarly, the Helmsies were tubular.
And the Lowies.

Totally!

The bud was caj
we scarfed out. It was hot.
He maxed OK.

OK!
How come he got so groovy?
such a bdd, so nerdy?
a shanky spaz?

OK!
Now I wanta say:

Gag me with a spoon!
What a geech!
You were munda cool
but now you're grody
you make me barf
you're not buf any more

Oh my God!
Kiss my tinal.
Get a nerd!
Get away!
Your fat butt disgusts me!

Valspenk, the dialect spoken by Valley Girls, originating in or near the San Fernando Valley, California. See Korn, *Reminders* (*TLS*, October 29) and *TLS Letters* (November 12; December 3) and Mills: *The Guardian*, October 26.

Gavin Ewart

Louis Simpson, and Fussell echoes his sentiments, adding that "after any war foot-soldiers are touchy". Fussell's war was spent as an infantryman of the line, and his account of it begins with the combination of accidents that brought an "upper-middle-class" young gentleman (who should have been in the Navy, at least, or in the OSS or Air Corps administration or editing the *Stars and Stripes*) into the 103rd Infantry Division. It then tells how at the age of twenty Fussell found himself leading forty rifleman into battle against the Germans. The horror of that battle, "less apocalyptic than shabbily ironic", and the inadequacy and mendacity of the military and cultural apparatus that brought it into being and sought to explain it, have stayed with Fussell all his life. He was left with "a special empirical knowledge, a feeling of ironic awareness manifesting itself in an intuitive skepticism about pretension, publicly enunciated truths, the vanities of learning, and the pomp of authority." These qualities are everywhere apparent in his writing, and are its great virtues.

nineteenth century punctured, its materialism exposed, the Movement ground to a halt.

Mallarmé provided velleity, but further development of the principles which the next generation drew from his work led to Marinetti and worse, to poets of whom it could be completed, in Hausman's words, "you treat us as Nebuchadnezzar did the Chaldeans, and expect us to find out the dream as well as the interpretation".

Of the first quotation, Kermode remarks: "It is hard to say whether a good supervisor would be more depressed by the historical generalization or by the prose." Nor, I think, would the Ideal Supervisor find much comfort in the second. If you are going to trace a line of development from Mallarmé to Marinetti via Hausman's apophthegms, and uncertain grasp of the meaning of the word "velicity" is probably a help rather than a hindrance.

Where the academic account puts forward ideas and evidence, the Royal Society account has to rely on a particular rhetoric. It is a rhetoric worth noting because of its current popularity among political and literary journalists. Writing in September 1981, Peregrine Worsthorne argued that the true reactionary must always be warning people against idealism and high-mindedness; and that such warnings are "bound often to take the form of verbal brutality, at best witty but at worst merely abusive, simply because these are the most effective corrosives with which to dissolve liberal waffling". Verbal brutality of this kind has contributed to the (one and the success) of *Private Eye*, as well as to the tone of reviews by Kingsley Amis or Philip Larkin or C. M. Sisson. It serves to identify its exponent as a sympathetic plain man, for ally against the "liberal waffle" which diminishes us by its condescension. Conquest, by no means the first to apply corrosives to "liberal waffle" about modern literature, but to my mind his version of lovable cantankerousness is less sprightly than some.

However, at the end of his essay, the verbal brutality lifts for a moment. Conquest quotes some lines by Larkin, and suggests that they "could hardly have been written, but for the modernist interlude and its effect on the language". There, surely is a case worth making, and one which would oblige its maker to attend to the kinds and qualities of writing.

I should perhaps add that several contributions to *Essays by Divers Hands* show no inclination to take part in the skirmish between *belles-lettres* and academic criticism. Michael Meyer writes about Ibsen and Strindberg, Tom Stacey about Andrew Young and R. S. Thomas, Andrew Wright about Trollope, and C. M. Woodhouse about Plato's "Influence on European Literature". W. F. Tynan laments late in "What is literature? A new look"

1981.10.15.50

The data of dispossession

John Melmoth

JANE ROGERS
Separate Tracks
207pp. Faber. £7.95.
0 571 11995 6

In a famous critique Virginia Woolf dismissed the literary realism of her contemporaries as cursory and "unfinished". With patrician distaste she refused to "complete" the works of Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy either by joining a society or by signing a cheque. *Separate Tracks* is an impeccable piece of social realism which assumes a continuity between art and life, between fiction and action, but which satirizes a sociology of good works and looks askance at the certainties of the picket line and mass demonstration. As the epigraph from Conrad makes plain, Jane Rogers intends that her novel, by adding the

data of dispossession, should provoke a rush of sympathy and understanding in the reader. Emma, her principal character, seeks authentic morganatic connections with the deprived. Politics and love merge in the educated heart.

The novel begins by sounding what Tennyson shudderingly dubbed the "troughs of Zolalism". The first four weeks of Anthony Childs's life are unrelentingly horrible. The squalor of the room in which he is cradled is insisted on in a welter of glum adjectives. His nameless young mother is systematically de-glamourized: her skinny arms and legs are "fish-belly" white, her head "more of a skull than a face". Parody is barely suspected, however, before Rogers begins to demonstrate considerable narrative versatility and command of nuance. The novel slides easily from drah mimesis into sophisticated psychoanalytical punning around a castrated African statue, to painterly evocations of suburban sprawl, the comedy of a mobile student soup

kitchen and the destructive utility of the schoolroom. The lives of Emma and Anthony (Orph after his abandonment) run along separate lines, and the discrepancy generates mutual incomprehension. Emma, relatively privileged and anguishedly middle class, comes, ironically, from the kind of family that is idealized in the "Peter and Jane" readers with which Orph is fobbed off in the foster home. The reality is different: her parents are separated and she is irked by a sense of her own nullity. Orph, institutionalized since infancy, persistently denied love, is blankly incapable of adequate responses. Emma believes that she discerns in his reserve a kind of freedom which satisfies her desire for romance. She casts him variously as the story-faced cowboy, a stoical Christ and even, exhilarated by her 'A' level French studies, an adolescent Mersault.

Their bizarre symbiosis originates

from the period when Emma, waiting to go up to university, takes a temporary job at the group home. Her *bien pensant* determination to stimulate the children precipitates a sequence of emotional disasters, and Orph's undemandingness seems increasingly attractive. He re-appears during her first term, at which point the ambivalence of her attitude towards this sixteen-year-old boy, compounded equally of protectiveness and embarrassment, compels a re-evaluation of her student concerns and the radical posturings of her friends. The gradual acquisition of political identities — Emma's libertarian and wet, Orph's violent and hard-left — hastens the eventual catastrophe.

While pursuing obscure inter-dependencies, *Separate Tracks* also concerns itself with the growth of knowledge about the world, as the unpalatable facts of national and international events are shown to impinge, in a variety of ways, on the characters.

Virgin in danger

Patricia Craig

PATRICK MCGINLEY
Goosefoot
254pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £7.50.
0 297 78209 6

Patrick McGinley's second novel is nothing if not eclectic. Clearly it was conceived as parody, but parody is confined to one genre only: among its targets are the self-discovery novel, the Dublin pub novel, the idiosyncratic Irish novel, the realistic rural novel, the comic-erotic novel, the whimsical novel, the aphoristic novel, the detective novel and the romance-thriller. There are moments, too, when parody gives way to something more straightforward; any of these categories is liable to surface briefly in an authentic form. The author writes from a slight uncertainty of tone, humour suits him best, but he doesn't always try to be funny, and he isn't consistently successful when he does. His addition to the cryptic quip and the outlandish fable sometimes gets the better of his literary judgment. In pieces, to a certain extent, take the place of plot. You could say the novel is all but immobilized by its desire to be all in a number of different directions at once. For the author, you feel, the ingredients are of more consequence than the end product.

What do we have? An Irish virgin, an agricultural maid, albeit a modern one equipped with a science degree and endowed with the capacity to drink four pints of stout at a sitting, turns back on the chance of a farm of her own and heads for Dublin. Patricia Teeling, who intends to learn more about herself than the Midlands can teach her, is sufficiently beautiful to move just continuously, and sufficiently large and strong to quell it with her bare hands. At the centre of Patrick's Irish word for centre), a standstill and good husbandry have thrown into high relief the cold comfort of her parents' farm. (Their way, if there had been more about them, would undoubtedly have resembled those of the Howling Starkadders.)

In a novel in which the sex-roles of characters are often reversed, Patrick is the fairy godmother. Cousin Hugh an ugly sister whose plays pay off, Patricia the younger son whose path is beset with symbolic difficulties. Among these is the problem of reproduction between those who wish to help her progress, and those who mean to hinder it; in this area, the picturesque thriller converges, with the heroine ultimately endangered by her inability to tell a joker from a killer.

There's an ordinary story, or, at least, the bare bones of one, superimposed on all this. Patricia Teeling moves into a furnished flat with a girl called Monica, secures a post as science mistress in a boys' school, and works off the advances of Bernard Baggott, a married man and an English journalist to boot, who lives in the flat downstairs. But ordinariness, and the odd forms it sometimes takes, do not have to secure a hold on the author's imagination. He has a much more instinct for full-blown bizarre, "balloon omelettes", "balloon omelettes", those who like dowsing, and coins in women's underclothes, and poets who dream of ostrich furs, and goose-steppers and pussy-footers, and dotted obtrusively about his narrative, and the isn't at all averse to gaudy decoration. He goes in, in about equal measures, for inconsequentiality and splomb, and he offers, in his more inspired passages, a celebration of his verbosity and virtuosity.

The latest issue of *The Irish Magazine* (Volume 1, Number 4, Winter 1982, 72pp. £1.25) contains stories by, among others, John Elliott, Graham Swift, Leon Garfield, Anthony Browne, Frederick Raphael, "In Conversation: Kazuo Ishiguro and Timothy Mo" and "Frank Murray Pile". "Reappraisal: Seamus Heaney" by Norman Lebrecht, and a profile of the 1982 Booker prize-winning author Thomas Kennerly by Gay Firth.

FICTION

Highly arched

Anne Duchêne

JANE GARDAM
The Pangs of Love and Other Stories
156pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.50.
0 341 10942 6

"And there you were with bright, ridiculous, marvelous, mocking eyes and long hard hands", thinks the narrator about her newly-deceased husband — one of the stories here, and while one is still pondering the attraction — indeed, even the appearance — of "ridiculous eyes", she continues: "It was not right or dignified to love so much. To let a man rule so much. It is obsession and not love, a mental illness not a life. And of course, with marriage came the quarrelling and pain because I knew there were so many others, and you not coming home, and teasing when you did and saying that there was only me but of course I knew it was not so because of cheap and tricky things like the smell of scent. It was worst just before the Robertsons went away."

The little story in this collection is one which, as the blurb says, "puts a tentative foot into feminist waters". It is about the youngest sister of Hans Andersen's little mermaid, who lures her dead sister's prince below the sea, but declines to lose his legs, and returns "through the foam, arriving home in time for tea and early sherry with his wife, who was much relieved"; and so much for male protestations of love, concludes the seventh mermaid (or "Mademoiselle Sept"), or "Frauentein" or "Senorita Septima", or "the seventh m": as the author variously calls her). The tentative foot is pretty highly arched.

One needs to ask the reader's pardon for opening with such quotations. Also the writers: it is presumably not for this kind of writing that Jane Gardam's seven books have variously attracted the Whitbread Award, the David Higham Award, and the Winifred Holtby Award, as well as runner-upship in the 1978 Booker. No one unfamiliar with her work can lightly ignore such a consensus; the reason has the more carefully to be sought why this present collection seems strained and unsatisfying, and the tone of the prose so often what has to be called pet.

The blurb also helpfully notes that the author is "married to a Q.C. with an international practice, and has travelled with him extensively, particularly in the Far East". And truly, without frivolity, the reader may come to the conclusion that she has been travelling too much. Too many time-zones and time-tables, too many dazzling, exhausting, exotic *locales* outside too many air-conditioned hotels, have begun to parch her roots.

Not surprisingly, several stories concern Englishwomen who are visiting far-flung places: Hong Kong, which is fairly extensively annotated, and India, or somewhere near India called "Drai", which is also the scene of a second story, dedicated to the proposition that some of the construction engineers and so forth on the "international circuit" — "the intercon, lot" — can in fact resist local temptation, preferring to spend the evening mulling over the blueprints with their colleagues and some whisky. (The narrator here, in "The First Adam", is one such, and talks a bit common: "My woman's made of paper. She's spread on the bed. She's lying and drawings. She's called The End and she's not my wife. She's too young, neither — she's knocking on. She's my mistress, this one..." and so on, in pretty unconvincing demotic).

The Englishwomen are all very nice, and intelligent, and respond strongly to the dreary poverty they encounter before they have to move on. And the author herself, with her notebooks in her hand-bag, seems to have become so experienced a visitor that she is not much at home in England either. A noticeably high proportion of these stories have recourse to the eccentricity of old bundles of geriatric rubbish, black or benign: a fairly frequent report these days for writers of *en un de maître*, but even the eccentric here lack persuasiveness. The common property of all these

stories, however, is efficiency; not a quality that promises much resonance or delicacy. One can see, for instance, that "Stone Trees", which supplied the opening quotations here, began with the observation that the fossilized trees in shallow water on the Isle of Wight are restored to movement by the incoming tide, and that this suggested an image of the restoration of feeling to a numb heart. Whose number? A childless widow's heart? — and he presto a story taking in Cambridge and Sacramento (for fashionable academic early married life), and the new widow's visit to their old friends the Robertsons, and her seeing, in one of Mrs Robertson's small sons, the exact replica of her husband (even to the "long hard hands"). In eight pages, this communicates itself as a pretty rushed job.

In assembly-line terms, these stories would probably be called a hiccup. Which does not stop one hoping that their designer will tear up some at least of her air-line tickets, and go back to the drawing-board to work in increased tranquillity.

Cultivating ruin

J. K. L. Walker

FORBES BRAMBLE
Roots
188pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.
0 241 10895 0

Time was when London's rural commuters came spanking into the City in their gigs from Hackney or Brixton Hill; now the demi-paradise is that much farther on, an hour out from Victoria or Waterloo or Liverpool Street, with the forty good companions, crippled by gardening and the cost of the season ticket, jogging homewards hoping that the children are asleep, wives not eloped with local lovers and that the gin hasn't run out. Forbes Bramble runs his train into Charing Cross from green belt Kent where laden apple-trees and farm-girls beguile Charles Sweet and his morning travelling companions, Heskelh, Park-Rogers, Bennenden, Chilly and Baker. It is high summer and hay-fever time for Sweet, cultivator of man-high lettuce, as pink-eyed and he fancies, fussy-eyed he sneezes his way compulsively towards another nerve-racking day with Games, Kowski and Bristow, architects of small distinction and less intuition of Sweet's unvoiced ambitions to be accepted as their partner.

Forbes Bramble is himself an architect by profession and his inside knowledge seems what would otherwise be a run-of-the-mill, if

So, wire me

Monty Haltrecht

SHOLOM ALEICHEM
Marlenbad
Translated by Alizu Shevring.
222pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £7.95.
0 297 78200 2

Marlenbad, written in 1911, is a novel of letters — working from what he had actually seen or heard, Sholom Aleichem composed much of his work in monologue or letter form. It is a Jewish comedy of manners set in a fashionable spa in western Bohemia when it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It would be no surprise to find the Crown Princes and Grand Duchesses of operaetta disappearing themselves here, while Schtritzler, with his refined morbidity, might have made it an arena for his games of embattled sexuality. But Aleichem instead lets loose a clutch of well-to-do Jews from the Nalevskis, the Jewish quarter of Warsaw. Wives and husbands are separated and letters

fly hysterically and hilariously back and forth between the visitors to Marlenbad and those left behind. In their new-found freedom young wives are ready to fling their bonnets over the windmill — or rather their *sheitels*, the wigs worn by the orthodox to cover shaven heads.

Readiest of all is Betzi Kurlander who, like Lady Teazle in Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*, has opted for a rich, doting and much older husband. She begins by squandering her willful way through Berlin's most fashionable store, in spite of her husband's anguished warnings about the customs, and the end, sure enough, sees her stranded at the customs, and impatiently awaiting rescue. In the meantime, all the men have been drawn to her irresistibly — stubborn, canny, even, perhaps, innocent, she has embroiled everyone in the merriest mayhem. She gets off scot-free herself while others pay the penalty in breakdown, divorce and blighted hopes.

The letters are full of delicious backbiting — each writer having as many faces as he or she has correspondents. The way to ensure that a secret is not kept is to commit it to paper and exhort the correspondent not to broadcast it. Letters pass treacherously from hand to hand, ending where they can do most damage. The Yamayichke, with her three daughters to sell off, is virtual head of a veritable Jewish school for scandal in a world as self-contained as a convent. But as the comedy speeds up hectically, it comes to resemble a Feydeau farce more than Sheridan, though the mayhem is still firmly controlled — there is a mad, hopeful pursuit to Ostend, with telegrams now replacing letters. Compressed as these are, the Yiddish lilt is still there. "You wire I didn't wire. Wired twice." And the response: "Enough wires. Come home immediately. Wire."

Aleichem wrote mainly, as in the Tevye stories on which *Fiddler on the Roof* was based, about small-town Jews, always with great warmth and sympathy, offering laughter in the face of suffering and achieving the universality of a folk-humorist. But even when he writes, as here, about the wealthy, for whom he reserved his ridicule and satire, his laughter has something warm and loving about it. The Nalevskis in Warsaw was later to become an infamous ghetto; and this novel has, for the modern reader, an extra romance.

Aleichem wrote in Yiddish in order to reach the largest possible number of his people. It was he who made it a literary language, one inherited by Isaac Bashevis Singer — a racy language with character created through idiom, nuance, and rhythm. Alizu Shevring's translation is conscientious and lively, and we are indebted to her for making this delicious novel available in English for the first time.

One of the old school

Andrew Hislop

MAX EGREMONT
The Ladies' Man
144pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.50.
0 436 14170 1

Max Egremont's first published novel, *The Ladies' Man*, is centred on a Tory politician of the old school, the school for scandal. (His party is not mentioned by name but there is no mistaking its identity.) John Price, a talented, ambitious minister and author of such works of conservative moderation as *No New Utopias* and *A Working Future* was forced to resign when it was revealed

that Melanie, a woman with whom he was casually but carnally acquainted, was the wife of a foreigner charged with drug and jewel smuggling. Price had tried to seduce Melanie, a woman of limited literary interests, with the inappropiate offering of a volume of Kipling's stories; she had been driven into his arms, though not by the delights of "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep" (a particular recommendation of Price) but rather by the promptings of a mysterious, crooked South African businessman.

The Ladies' Man, however, is not a work of prudence. The sex (conjured up retrospectively) is nothing Norma Levy would write home about and Price himself is not a figure of great moral disrepute. His self-sacrificing,

supporting wife is not jilted but dead, and his downfall is the result not of depraved lust so much as a solipsistic lack of perception of the evil around him, and the self-deception involved in his confusion of sexual desire with awareness of others: "If he was a ladies' man (Price told himself) it was because he had a real fascination for the intimate parts of the human condition, a real desire to probe the deepest hopes and anxieties of other lives." So much for the wisdom of carnal knowledge. One feels that the only anxieties he could hope to understand are his own.

Judging from the obscure suggestions of conspiratorial menace involving his occasional companion, Clare, and Peters, a utopian radical politician, his understanding of others is not even improved by his sexual decline. Obviously, a little carnal knowledge is still a dangerous thing.

His chief anxiety at the end is to save the country from Peters (whom he had befriended at Oxford), using evidence of the latter's complicity with the South African crook provided by a contrived Melanie. Unfortunately, his political career has not given him much experience in rescue acts. A protégé of Brodie, a doyen of the party who combined a romantic, nationalistic historical vision with the practicalities of political power, he appears to have pursued his personal political ambitions without having sullied his detached view of the realm by too "practical" an acquaintance (apart from a Blitz bedding of Peters's sister) with one of the two nations he wishes to save. Now an ill, fumbling wreck of a man, he has to travel north to Peters's home territory to seek him out. It is unclear whether his mission is madness or not, since Peters's position and character seem through the solipsistic vision to be mere fictional elphers.

Max Egremont writes intelligently and well, the more so when he controls his use of such words as "orotund" and "insipidated". His manipulation of flashback to describe Price's career is skilful, but his novel is uncertain of its identity. It begins as a political thriller, develops into an intimate portrait of Price, then returns briefly and unconvincingly to its thriller plot. The effect is bizarre, as though cuts have been made without a sure grasp of the economic balance of the whole or concern for the fate of characters who suddenly find themselves unemployed. Perhaps the structure is intended as a comment on other attempts to save the country.

Smile and metaphor are handled well, and daily speech (particularly the speech of Germans, something which almost no one manages to bring off) is reproduced perfectly: "Ja! du hast recht. Ich bin froh, I-am-cheeky, all German girls tell me the same thing. I-am-cheeky, let me see? You like it?" Publishers, who cannot always be relied on in such matters as presentation, are occasionally better when it comes to hawking their wares. It is to be hoped that this excellent novel will find the wide audience it deserves.

Untender traps

Brian Morton

SUSAN CHEEVER
The Cage
180pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £6.95.
0 297 78201 0

Susan Cheever's third novel is a curious, nostalgic look at contemporary America. William Bristol is a senior editor with a prestigious New York magazine, not unlike *Newsweek*, where Cheever worked for a time. Pressured and harassed, Bristol has succumbed to a kind of anesthetized efficiency, become an organization man. His wife, Julia, unfulfilled, has abandoned herself to alcohol, paranoid fantasies of violence and a wistful attachment to her own childhood and her dead father.

The Cage alternates between the anonymous bustle of New York City and the inbred, claustrophobic atmosphere of Northwood, the New

Hampshire estate left to the Bristols by Julia's father. The house, damp and disintegrating, is an emblem of a past which still exerts a compelling power; but it lacks the comforts and securities Julia desperately needs. The abandoned and empty manor, built by Julia's father, provides the novel's central image. The elephant cage, in which William is eventually trapped by his wife while she acts out a sinister ritual of wifely devotion, is an almost too obvious symbol of the constraints and failing love. Locally arresting and suggestive detail is interlarded with symbols like the cage; overall, the tone lacks assurance.

At the novel's climax — heavily signalled and thus somewhat deadened — Cheever tries to create a kind of synthesis, linking past and present and tying the novel's emotional logic more firmly to the true dramatic structure she has employed.

Despite its flaws, *The Cage* shows a remarkable grasp of emotional nuance and social narrowness, characteristic of a sensibility

which has nothing to do with doctrinaire feminism. Sadly, though, by her own admirably methodical procedures, by the need to be true to the complexities of the emotions and, at the same time, to bring her story to a satisfying and dramatic conclusion. The climax fails to explain or resolve the contradictions of the Bristols' marriage; Cheever writes herself into a corner, and the novel takes an uncomfortable leap out of realism into psychological fantasy.

Susan Cheever suffers from the inevitable comparison with her father, John Cheever. Inevitable, in that the daughter has chosen to cover the same ground as her father did: literary New York and rural New England. John Cheever combined detailed and precise observation with a warm humanism and wry structural ironies which lifted his work above the immediate targets of its mild satire. *The Cage* is brilliantly evocative of a vision necessary to knit the details into a stronger, broader fabric.

Almost coming through

Savkar Altinel

PATRICIA WENDORF
Peacefully: In Berlin
180pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.
0 241 10885 3

That designers of dust-jackets and writers of blurbs are not necessarily an author's best friends is amply confirmed by this slim book, which comes equipped with a reproduction of the heavily "symbolic" painting by J. Armstrong showing a gigantic flower rising from the ruins of a bombed town, and a solemn exhortation to be prepared for the discovery that "a loving marriage between a German man and an English woman has more potential for healing old wounds than any cold-blooded political declaration", but turns out to be sensitive, intelligent and beautifully written all the same.

On her way back to Germany for the first time in years, Patricia Wendorf's middle-aged English heroine, Cathy Baumann, looks back on her life with her dead German husband Kurt while the Hook van Holland-Berlin Express carries her eastwards. Everything pertaining to her journey is related in the conventional past tense, but her memories, which make up the bulk of the novel, are given through a cinematic sequence, is of course a cliché, but it is deployed here with great success, making it seem as if it is indeed the present which is dead, while the past is forever alive.

Handsome, blond Kurt is first seen as a prisoner-of-war in England. He then marries Cathy and, after a brief attempt to set up home in the chaotic Germany of 1948, they return to her native Midlands. A proud man bewildered and embittered by defeat, he sees his marriage and increasing anglicization as the ultimate triumph of the enemy and withdraws into himself,

while Cathy, ever conscious of not being the "sturdy, lusty Brunnhilde" she thinks he really would have liked, struggles not to let him go. The result is a union at once unhappy and charged with love, until, shortly before his premature death from a series of heart attacks, they both begin to mellow. For them there is not — as there was in another Anglo-German marriage — an apocalyptic sense of having come through, but they do learn to live together, and losing him leaves her shaken and inconsolable.

Mrs Wendorf has many strengths as a writer, one of them being a wonderful economy. She can pin down a complex mood or experience by referring to a few external details. Germany's humiliation becomes the ridiculous suit

of emerald green serge ("You look exactly like Robin Hood", says Cathy) which is issued to Kurt on his discharge from prison camp. Places, too, are evoked with the same precision.

Smile and metaphor are handled well, and daily speech (particularly the speech of Germans, something which almost no one manages to bring off) is reproduced perfectly: "Ja! du hast recht. Ich bin froh, I-am-cheeky, all German girls tell me the same thing. I-am-cheeky, let me see? You like it?" Publishers, who cannot always be relied on in such matters as presentation, are occasionally better when it comes to hawking their wares. It is to be hoped that this excellent novel will find the wide audience it deserves.

There's an ordinary story, or, at least, the bare bones of one, superimposed on all this. Patricia Teeling moves into a furnished flat with a girl called Monica, secures a post as science mistress in a boys' school, and works off the advances of Bernard Baggott, a married man and an English journalist to boot, who lives in the flat downstairs. But ordinariness, and the odd forms it sometimes takes, do not have to secure a hold on the author's imagination. He has a much more instinct for full-blown bizarre, "balloon omelettes", "balloon omelettes", those who like dowsing, and coins in women's underclothes, and poets who dream of ostrich furs, and goose-steppers and pussy-footers, and dotted obtrusively about his narrative, and the isn't at all averse to gaudy decoration. He goes in, in about equal measures, for inconsequentiality and splomb, and he offers, in his more inspired passages, a celebration of his verbosity and virtuosity.

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The latest issue of *The Irish Magazine* (Volume 1, Number 4, Winter 1982, 72pp. £1.25) contains stories by, among others, John Elliott, Graham Swift, Leon Garfield, Anthony Browne, Frederick Raphael, "In Conversation: Kazuo Ishiguro and Timothy Mo" and "Frank Murray Pile". "Reappraisal: Seamus Heaney" by Norman Lebrecht, and a profile of the 1982 Booker prize-winning author Thomas Kennerly by Gay Firth.

Speaking out and holding back

Lewis Jones

GILLIAN AVERY
Onlookers
206pp. Collins. £6.95.
0 00 222673 1

Onlookers comprises a pair of cautionary tales: in the first a clever young man is humiliated for his boorishness; in the second an imaginative young woman causes suffering both for herself and others by her excessive reserve. The stories are linked by the journal of a seventeen-year-old orphan, called Louise Fleming, written during 1882-83. It begins with her arrival at Marlwood House in Radnorshire, the home of her guardian, a clergyman and baronet some fifteen years her senior; during its course, Louise falls in love with its stern and lofty figure; by the end of it, she has agreed to marry him. The reader sees only fragments of this journal, but leaps that it is full of amusing and confident sketches of local life, that it is shaped like a novel, and that there are suggestions in it of

mature and profound melancholy.

The manuscript was discovered in a second-hand book shop by Henry Tosswell, a poet, a man of ravaged face and debauched past, who lived a life of conspicuous repentance in a cottage at Canterbury College, Oxford. It was published, with an introduction by Antony Adams, the Warden of Canterbury, and did very well. A Fleming Society was founded, with Tosswell as President; the journal was taken up by the book clubs and adapted for television. The publishers think it's time for a book about Louise consisting mainly of contemporary photographs; and Trevor Hancock, a former student at Canterbury, now a lecturer at Bradford, is invited to contribute a text.

Trevor is ill-suited to the task. He has written a book about the diaries of modern writers, such as Kafka and Gide, but has less enthusiasm for Louise. And, though he envies the Victorians their faith and optimism, he is enraged by their "poisons of propriety". As a socially uncertain undergraduate, Trevor's taste was to flout the conventions of those he wished to impress; this has become an unfortunate habit, limiting his

emotional range to "contempt and irritability". The Fleming Society, on which he relies for information and goodwill, seems to him to be disgustingly sentimental and, despite the youthful enthusiasm of its members, Jennifer, he makes his opinion very obvious. He relies on his college mafia to protect him from the consequences of this provocation, but instead they give him the Sicilian treatment.

The tale of Margaret Boys Talbot, a neighbour of Louise and ten years her senior, who was so proud that "she took care always to let it be thought that she had little opinion of herself", is much more complex. Trevor's downfall has the clarity of a Victorian moral exemplum; but the second part of the book offers an oblique vindication of his modern ideas. "The true story of Louise is the opposite of what it appears. It is an inversion of the archetypal romance, a sort of tragic *Emma*, in which, Knightley marries Harriet and lives miserably over after; a story about 'ego death' and 'id capture', and the nature of fictional truth. Gillian Avery's observation of both periods is impeccable, and her delicate ironies reflect endlessly across the century.

Cornell

The West German radicals of the nineteen sixties announced the death of literature. For them literature, both past and present, as well as conventional discussions of literary issues, had lost its meaning. In *The Institution of Criticism*, Peter Uwe Hohendahl explores the implications of this cultural crisis from a Marxist perspective and attempts to define the tasks and responsibilities of criticism in advanced capitalist societies.

THE INSTITUTION OF CRITICISM

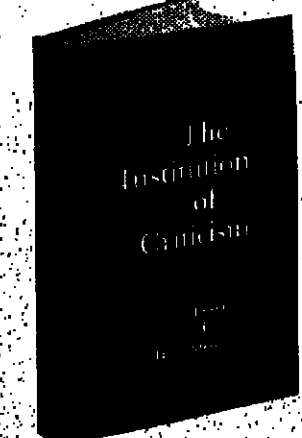
By PETER UWE HOHENDAH

Hohendahl takes a close look at the social history of literary criticism in Germany from the eighteenth century to the present, treating both academic criticism and the reviews that appeared in the mass media. While many other critics have debated the aesthetic and theoretical issues implicit in the practice of literature and literary criticism, Hohendahl focuses on the institutional side of criticism. Drawing on the tradition of the Frankfurt School and on Jürgen Habermas's concept of the public sphere, he sheds light on some of the important political and social forces that help to shape literature and culture generally.

This volume is made up of seven essays originally published in German and a long new theoretical introduction written specifically by the author with English-language readers in mind. *The Institution of Criticism*, which calls for a criticism that reflects the ever-changing relations between culture, politics, and economics, will convey the rich possibilities of the German critical tradition to those who employ American or French critical techniques and for students of contemporary critical theory.

"The book gives a balanced, thought-provoking examination of postwar German literary debates.... An excellent introduction to an analysis of contemporary German literary criticism and helpful to anyone studying modern German culture or modern literary theory." — *Choice*

"A Marxist history of book reviewing and more formal modes of criticism in Germany from the late Enlightenment to the late 1960s, this volume not only explores the social and political forces underlying public analysis and judgment of literature but expounds a theory of critical tasks and responsibilities.... Hohendahl's study is factually rich and contains modes of analysis certain to interest students of 'reception history' in any field of the humanities." — *The Virginia Quarterly Review*



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By House, 37 Dover Street
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or
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Uwe Hohendahl

commentary

A policy for literature?

Robert Hewison

By the time this is published Charles Osborne, Literature Director of the Arts Council, will be well away from the Department's offices in Covent Garden. He will be getting ready to go to America, where he will spend some weeks enjoying contemporary American opera and doing some more work on a new Dictionary of Opera he is writing for Simon and Schuster.

The day before he took his leave the Literature Advisory Panel met once more to discuss policy. On the agenda was not the swingeing attack by the panel member Michael Church on almost all the Literature Department's activities, reported in "Behind the lines" two weeks ago, but a paper from the Director himself. Charles Osborne declined an invitation to write his own account of the paper. The original was "too scrappy" and he had no time. Instead he agreed to be interviewed.

Michael Church's criticisms appear to have passed the Literature Director completely by. He said he had nothing to say about Church's paper at all. Instead, he proposes that the Literature policy of the Arts Council shall remain very much as it was before. There are two areas of fresh emphasis: the first runs completely contrary to Church's proposals. Church had questioned the validity of giving grants to publishers, and suggested that some of them were manipulating the system. Osborne is in favour of giving grants to publishers, in order to subsidize not just single works, but series of titles, Secker and Warburg, Allison and Busby, and John Calder are beneficiaries. The new grants to publishers will include specific sums committed to promoting the books that are subsidized.

Osborne's other new policy proposal which enabled him to state with confidence that the Literature Department would be asking for considerably more money next year—is

for a more thorough investigation of the feasibility of setting up a number of bookshops outside London. The Arts Council has a shop in London, so why not disseminate literature through similar outlets elsewhere? (This idea has been around for some time, and may not find favour with booksellers.) The scheme would be expensive, and the Arts Council would have to be firmly persuaded that it was worthwhile.

The difference between Osborne's "more-of-the-same" views and Church's radical proposals for cutting grants to "mediocre" magazines and giving more help to living writers—in particular unacademic authors of non-fiction—and generally re-animating the stultified activities of the Department, illustrates the difficulties of administering patronage the Arts Council's way. Osborne has been there for almost as long as there has been a Literature Department, (established, well after the rest, in 1966). Michael Church has been on the Advisory Panel since last April. Yet the Director can claim that he is doing no more than following the policies laid down by the twenty members of the Arts Council, policies that they have agreed on the advice of their specialist panels. Meanwhile the membership of both Council and panels are constantly changing. Two years ago the then Literature Advisory Panel agreed that the emphasis should be on helping readers rather than writers. That is the policy upon whose execution Michael Church is expected to advise.

I put it to Charles Osborne that because he knew what the Department's policy was supposed to be, and he had to explain it to advisers who didn't, he was in a far more powerful position than a mere servant of the Council. He did not deny the value of the continuity of his experience—but "any serious suggestion that has come to me I have put to the Council".

In Osborne's view, the reason for all these arguments about "literature policy" is the unique difficulty in

defining literature. Other art forms are instantly recognizable and take place in definable buildings. But many of the things that go on between hard covers are not literature at all. "The definition must be something that is based on imaginative or creative writing—some non-fiction must surely be classed as literature. The criterion really is the force of the writing, and the *ad hoc* nature of the Literature Department's policy must be to spread the knowledge of good literature of the present and past as widely as possible."

Why then did so many people feel that this wasn't being done? Why was the Department so often accused of being lazy? "There is a limit to what I can do without being called interventionist. You know, we give a greater number of grants than we refuse." It appears that even successful schemes like Creative Writing Fellowships are not expanded because more institutions do not apply. When urged to do something to help living writers who cannot get their work published, the Department's investigations fail to turn up any muted Millions.

The minutes of what appears to have been a desultory meeting of the Literature Panel will now go forward for consideration by the formal policy makers, the Council members themselves. With Sir William Rees-Mogg as Chairman, and Margherita Laski combining her chairmanship of the Literature Panel with Vice-Chairmanship of the Council, it is to be hoped that the discussion of literature policy will not be proportionate to the tiny amount the Literature Department spends.

Charles Osborne, on his sabbatical, will not be taking part in the debate. His aim is to set the Department on an even keel, and, some time within the next four years, to withdraw. Fresh literary projects beckon him, and he wishes to take up some new administrative work while there is still time for him to do so. This hint of retirement has nothing to do with the attacks that are regularly made on him. "Really, I thrive on them."



A portrait of Rana Amar Singh II, c 1698—a work included in the exhibition Indian Drawing which has been selected by Howard Hodgkin for the Hayward Gallery. It can be seen until April 17, and will be reviewed in a future issue of the TLS.

Backwards and forwards

Mary Furness

Heat and Dust
Curzon Cinema

Ruth Praver Jhabvala's novel *Heat and Dust* is the story of Olivia, a young English mamsell of the 1920s, recently married and in India for the first time. It is all new to her and she does not understand it, particularly the rigid conventions which keep the Indians and the English apart. Her hard-working husband leaves her alone all day. She loves him but is gradually seduced, without being aware of what is happening to her, by the Nawab (the local Indian prince) who, with his entourage, pays her visits, takes her on picnics, and entertains her in his palace. She becomes pregnant. Douglas, her husband, regards this as the apogee of their dreams; the Nawab has no doubt that the child is his. Olivia has a "miscarriage" and is found out and exposed by the local English doctor. She flees to the Nawab's palace and crosses over to the "other side" for ever. She lives out her days alone in the Nawab's house in the mountains and it is a matter for speculation how she feels and what she does, since she no longer communicates with anybody.

Literally fleshed out, the character in the celluloid version is far more real than they are in the book. Here Olivia (Greta Scacchi) is a young, vacuous, fun-loving, uncomprehending and dim-witted seductress. Here is her husband (Christopher Cazenove), uncomprehending, uncomprehendingly simple. Here is the handsome Nawab (Shashi Kapoor), charming, enigmatic, and irresistible. Here is the Begum (Jaffrey) and her entourage, unseen and unsuspected by Olivia, but all-powerful in the palace. Here above all is Harry (brilliantly played by Nicholas Grace), the weak-willed, livered creature of the Nawab, long to go home but too debilitated by surmounting himself to do so. Here are the boring English lot, whose company Olivia has to endure. Even Anne, portrayed by Julie Christie, is uncomprehending, even more vacuous than Olivia, only she is unreflecting, but her relations with India are far more straightforward and have none of the passion and romance of Olivia's. It is even if one does have the suspicion that with its obligatory soft-focus photography—it is too easily

because, at least as she is revealed in her letters, she does not have any inclination to introspection.

In contrast, the characters in *The Europeans*, of which the Indian Ivory team made a film (1979) in 1979, used for the film do not think and their actions, badly portrayed, are meaningless without the dimension of their accompanying ruminations. But in *Heat and Dust*, since sections are not matter; indeed it is a positive advantage in the film, which is absolutely faithful to the book (the book could indeed be the book of the film.) Now we have people's feelings, expressions, clothes and houses to look at. The switches backwards and forwards from 1920s Satipur to 1980s Satipur work smoothly and there seems to be much more to point to than we can see, for instance Olivia's house as it was when she lived in it and as it is now, used for Government offices. What was Dr and Mrs Sapoori's bungalow is now the Post Office. The Nawab's palace is uninhabited but has a flavour of the gaudy glamour which we have seen Olivia luxuriate in.

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All that is known now about Olivia is from hearsay and from the letters which she wrote to her sister. These have been left to her step-granddaughter Anne, a modern young Englishwoman, who becomes fascinated by her story and goes to Satipur to immerse herself more deeply in it. She too is seduced by India, gets pregnant (by her Indian landlord) and the story leaves her, waiting to have her baby and living near the house in the mountains in which Olivia ended her days.

The film is a great deal better than the book. As a novel it is thin and unsatisfactory. One feels somehow cheated by it; written as if it were a true story, it has just such deficiencies as an incomplete slice of life told in letters might, without the virtue of being true. Just as we are getting interested in Olivia and wanting to know what happens next, we have to find out how she's getting on and what she thinks. It would be far more interesting to know what Olivia thinks but we can't

A state of slight hysteria

April FitzLyons

Tchaikovsky
The Queen of Spades
London Coliseum

From the moment the curtain rises on David Pountney's exciting new production of *The Queen of Spades*, we realize that this is not going to be a conventional evening. Instead of the young children playing with their parents in the Summer Garden, to whom we are accustomed, we see little white-clad Napoleons symbolically attacking the infant Hermann. From then on we know that anything is possible, and we are not mistaken. This *Queen of Spades* unfolds in no known place or epoch; it is all—or almost all—in the mind.

Purists will no doubt assert that Pountney has taken too many liberties with the libretto; but Modeste Tchaikovsky's melodramatic travesty of Pushkin's astringent, elegant and austere story is not sacrosanct, although it pleased the composer. Pountney does take liberties but, with one or two exceptions, they are justified. In fact, perhaps he should have taken more liberties; if he had substituted Pushkin's ending—Hermann in a madhouse for Tchaikovsky's—Hermann's suicide—he could have deepened with all pretence to logic, and shown everything as a figment of Hermann's imagination. As it is, the

few remaining shreds of realism, necessitated by the plot, are out of step with the rest of the production. Pountney has all the same created a splendid theatrical experience, a production more choreographic than operatic, which enmeshes the audience not in the rather silly meanderings of the plot, but in the neurotic fantasies of a deranged mind. Maria Björnson's designs, besides being a delight to the eye, play an important part in creating this illusion. White predominates in this hallucinatory world; long white gauze curtains surround the stage or, on occasion, are drawn across it to isolate Hermann even further from reality. There is no other scenery except, when necessary, the gaming-table, and chairs, cunningly deployed by what appear to be members of the Red Army. The chorus, its members all dressed alike and in muted colours, assumes a new importance, and is used like the chorus in a Greek tragedy. In the centre of this pale and ghostly world is the black figure of Hermann, the only character in the opera, apart from the Countess, who matters.

Pushkin's Hermann is an unscrupulous, cold and, gripped by a single obsession: money, which he hopes to obtain through the secret of the three cards. His one-track mind is unhinged by his failure to do so. But Tchaikovsky's Hermann has two obsessions: money, and Liza; it is the pursuit of money, rather than Liza, which causes his downfall. Pushkin had no sympathy for his Hermann; but Tchaikovsky "felt sorry" for his hero. On the day when he composed the

music for Hermann's suicide, he noted in his diary: "I wept dreadfully when Hermann gave up the ghost." He confessed to his brother that he enjoyed "the very agreeable state of slight hysteria" which these tears provoked; and he said that, as he identified Hermann with Nikolai Figner, the handsome, elegant and romantic—but not, it seems, homosexual—tenor for whom he wrote the part, "he shared very keenly in his sad fate." But the neurotic music of the opera, akin to that of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, gives the lie to this identification; and the orchestra, conducted with passionate urgency by Mark Elder, has little difficulty in persuading us that Tchaikovsky identified Hermann not with Figner, but with himself. Hermann, the outsider with a guilty secret, inwardly hysterical, but outwardly always Teutonically correct, parallels Tchaikovsky, the brilliantly successful public figure, always at risk because of his homosexuality. Now that we know that Tchaikovsky's own death, only three years after he composed the opera, was probably suicide, his tears and "slight hysteria" when composing the music for Hermann's death take on a new significance.

Graham Clark's musically undistinguished performance as Hermann hovers uneasily between Pushkin's cold, mad Hermann, and Tchaikovsky's warmer, hysterical hero. Clark's paranoia, well portrayed, nevertheless begins too early, right at the start of the opera, when there is insufficient reason for it.

Of course, if Hermann were reliving it all in the madhouse, this would not matter; but, since he dies, some semblance of chronology is necessary. Clark fails to engage our pity; his performance is always interesting, but not moving. We cannot believe in his love for Liza; but perhaps Tchaikovsky couldn't believe in it either. Clark's treatment of the unfortunate girl (Marie Slorach) at times seems to parallel Tchaikovsky's revision for his own bride. In any case, Liza should be just an idea, not this very flesh-and-blood creature. In this production Liza's suicide is not explicit; in the form of an old coat, she is reunited with Hermann in death. This is one of Pountney's liberties which does not come off.

Even purists could not carp at the scene in the Countess's bedroom—the only scene taken directly from Pushkin. This is beautifully and conventionally staged, and admirably sung and acted by Sarah Walker. Less effective is the apparition of not one, but several countesses, who suggest a *corps de ballet* rather than hallucinations, and fail to cause the necessary *frisson*.

Tchaikovsky once said that he could not write opera unless he could "move and pine" the characters. If Pountney's production fails, despite its brilliance and sensitivity, to make us love and pity the characters, this is the librettist's fault, not his; but he does make us pity the composer, which is, perhaps, a truer interpretation of this opera.

Convenient problems

Peter Kemp

Shakespeare Lives!
Channel 4

There are times in *Shakespeare Lives!* when you feel that he's more likely to be turning in his grave. Mostly, they are when Michael Bogdanov is outlining schemes to make his plays "modern and relevant", "plays for today". Luckily, there's more to *Shakespeare Lives!* than this. Besides canvassing "possibilities of making Shakespeare more accessible in the 1980s", it aims to "explore extracts in a workshop situation", with actors from the National Theatre interpreting complex scenes and an audience responding volubly to them.

About the former issue, Bogdanov is bursting with beliefs. Prominent among them is that there is a need to offer "Shakespeare by analogy"—in which parallels from contemporary politics are imported heftily into the plays. Making Shakespeare's drama seem like something else, however, is only the start: Bogdanov also wants to turn it into something else. Considering that "anything goes" is a modern audience's, he emphasizes: "anything goes—that means turning up together again." What he envisages is not just "re-appraisal" but "re-writing".

This approach has been tried in previous centuries; a member of the audience sharply pointed out, with speeches re-shuffled and tragic conclusions costly re-cast to suit some supposed taste of the times. This was one analogy Bogdanov did not find instructive, and he by-passed it with some muttering about the difference being that his plans for the plays were to "change them, out them—for now". The programmes have given some intimations of what might be entailed. Bogdanov feels happier with his Shakespeare, it appears, when it mixes melodrama and the modish. Extrapolating from the final scene of *Timon of Athens*, for example, he luridly declared that Alcibiades "has echoes of every single Fascist dictator" and "instigates a Fascist dictatorship". But the play, snarlingly savage as it often is, merely shows us a moderate

a man who pledges that he will respect the Aliens, he has conquered, who agrees to execute only enemies "set out for reproof" by the Athenian senate, and who guarantees that his troops will be subject to "your public laws/At heaven's answer".

Bogdanov's taste for squeezing texts into any shape he likes is much aided by his removal of scenes from the controlling pressure of their overall context, making them seem more plastic than they are. The first plays he has handled, too—*The Taming of the Shrew* and *Timon of Athens*—are conveniently problematical. They also afford special scope for his desire to link Shakespeare with contemporary concerns. *Timon of Athens*, for example, he interprets as an indictment of capitalism; this, he feels, is why it is now—as he somewhat unfortunately phrased it—"gaining currency".

Some members of the audience were less enamoured of the play. Its language was too difficult, for one thing. How can you get "those fabulous meanings about the meaning of life across to your average person"? It was asked, with all that archaic vocabulary lumbering the lines: "perhaps much of it needs to be translated." A suggestion from Daniel Massey that people take the trouble to re-quip themselves to understand the play met with predictable resistance: he was sounding a bit elitist. And the point was soon smothered under woolly talk about the possible need for "total re-education and overhauling of our education system".

Shakespeare Lives! has considerable snags, but fortunately sometimes manages to twitch itself free of them. When unimpeded by the pull towards politics—or preaching, it provides a fascinating opportunity to observe actors in rehearsal. Most of those involved are "rivetingly good": with Daniel Massey and Suzanne Bertish so far quite outstanding. Watching them cast themselves more and more comfortably into a role is eye- and ear-catching. Speeches are tugged satisfyingly into place as the right intonation is discovered. Changes of pace and volume shake out different patterns from the same material. Accents are dragged over lines to see what, if anything, they add. It is these actors, in their virtuoso renderings of Shakespeare's scenes, who justify the programme's title.

The survival of idealism

John Hope Mason

DAVID HARE
A Map of the World
Lyttelton Theatre

Despite the large claims David Hare's early plays made to be describing the state of England, there was always a danger that the general view, the overall verdict, would collapse into a purely local add, personal reaction. This was particularly the case with *Plenty*, where what set out to be a chronicle of disappointment at the unfulfilled promise of Britain's post-war history came across more as a projection back onto it of disappointment at the unfulfilled promise of the 1960s. Hare is too good a writer and too accomplished a playwright not to have made *Plenty* a strong theatrical experience, but the underlying difficulty remained.

In his new play, *A Map of the World*, he has confronted this difficulty—the relationship between individual experience and general judgment—in the context of the general view of the world. The difficulty is not completely resolved—in part because other concerns are equally pressing—but that is less important than the courage Hare shows in grasping this particular nettle and the tenacity with which he follows his theme through to its conclusion. In the end the play lives up to its high ambition.

The action shifts between a film studio in England and a Unesco conference on poverty in Bombay. Among those invited to speak at the conference is a famous Indian novelist, Victor Mehta, who grew up in a village in Bihar, came to England and now

lives in Shropshire. Mehta has little respect for the United Nations and even less for Marxist reformers; he sees self-deception everywhere and regards that as worse than poverty. As a writer he is dedicated to exposing lies wherever they occur, however uncomfortable the results may be.

Also present at the conference is a young, idealistic, left-wing English journalist, and the clash between him and Mehta creates the dynamic of the play. Both men are affected by the other's beliefs and both are altered by their meeting. Back in England Mehta writes a book about the conference and this is now being turned into a film. A beautiful American actress had also been in Bombay and the two men's pursuit of her—Mehta later marries her—provides the romantic interest of the film.

There is much that is unsatisfactory about this material. The framework of the film studio is cumbersome and adds little of consequence. Neither the fact that the film trivializes the serious issues of the conference nor the suggestion that people in England are interested only in sex and cars, is sufficiently well realized to justify these scenes. The only exception to this is the final scene, which introduces a new dimension and gives an impressive ending to the play.

The romantic theme is also perfunctory. The part of the American actress, poorly performed by Diana Quick, is underwritten and hardly binds the narrative together in the way that was intended. As in other Hare plays love is more suggested than expressed. Here, where it is meant to be central to the action, its absence is glaring.

This lack of definition applies more generally. There is a lack of texture, of idiom; that is unusual in Hare's

writing. Both the film world and the conference world have a disembodied, insubstantial feel about them. Everyone seems to be in transit. In one sense this could be a true reflection both of film studios and of life in India, where the visitor does indeed feel insubstantial beside the vast immobility of Indian life. But in the theatre we need something more specific to engage us, and that is something which the play takes a long time to deliver.

But eventually it does deliver. We see the pain of world, poverty and injustice, first from one angle, then from another. Each view, inspires different questions, and at each point the truth comes to look different. What might sound schematic in synopsis is in fact rich in performance. Our reservations fall away as we come closer and closer to the matter in hand; the survival of idealism, the possibility of change.

At the centre of the play is the Indian novelist and in this role Kishan Sethi is magnificent, combining anger, warmth and tremendous dignity. Bill Nighy as the young idealist is also good, and the production, by Hare himself, is beautifully handled. Its spaciousness and leisurely pace are appropriate to a play in which the earlier restlessness has gone; in its place is something that is less finished, but more penetrating. The voices are quieter but they carry further.

A Map of the World is published by Faber and Faber (83pp, £3.50, 0 571 1996 4). Admirers of the Merchant-Ivory films will be interested in the fact that the play is being filmed in *The Merchant-Ivory Company: Twenty-One Years of Merchant-Ivory Films* (104pp, £4.50, 0 851 70 127 2), which has just been published.

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Oxford University Press

to the editor

History of Parliament

Sir, - In J. H. Hexter's interesting review (January 21) of the latest volumes of *The History of Parliament* he writes:

The House of Commons 1509-1558, of course, escapes all of the above sorts of criticism. It does so because it has no "introductory survey" to criticize. One can avoid all errors of commission by doing nothing. . . . To construct the introductory survey of the 1509-1558 volumes on the same general principles as the previously published volumes appears to have been truly impossible. Professor Bindoff showed very good sense indeed in not trying to do it.

In 1981 Professor Bindoff spent his last week in the United States with me. From my house he went directly to a New York airport to fly to London. Just over a month later, in December, he died.

While with me we discussed his future plans. He told me his first duty was to write an introductory survey to the volumes of the Parliamentary History, which he was editing and which were otherwise approaching completion.

He was not a man to shirk what he considered to be his duty because it might be difficult to accomplish. He was not a man to neglect some task just to avoid making errors. Nor was he a man to follow blindly patterns set by predecessors. Had he lived I am sure he would have written an introductory survey and would have found a way to write a useful (and good) one based on the information available about his period.

GEORGE WOODBRIDGE.

32, Clarke Street, Newport, RI 02840.

Sir, - I have read J. H. Hexter's stirring essay-review (January 21) with great interest - and with some little relief at finding myself among those unqualified to meet the stern challenge he puts. Only his first few paragraphs lie within my competence, and of these I must first say that, whatever their faults, I shall doubtless re-read them with admiration along with the rest. There are times when grand subjects sprawling beyond the range of any one scholar require the rare perspicacity and perspective that Hexter has brought to this one, and there is a certain vigour in what he says about the origins of medieval parliamentary institutions. Yet it would be difficult to find a better illustration of the confusion that at present surrounds that subject in general discourse.

If the problem is to explain a uniquely Western inspiration, it won't do to point to an eleventh-century general of the representation of obligatory service to lords. Little or nothing in eleventh-century practice yet pointed to that device, nor when it came - was there anything in it more palpably convenient for Europeans faced with "considerable distances and thin spans" than for the patrons and clients of non-Western traditional societies. Hexter wisely avoids speaking of "feudal" origins of representation, only to slip into the conceptual pit of associating community and delegation with lordship and allegiance. In England, at least, early village deputies seem to have answered to exigencies that were not peculiarly seigniorial - nor even, for all we yet know, peculiarly Western.

Somewhat the same may be said of the deputations to early Hispanic courts. To speak of these as "a bright idea . . . of some European ruler or other" - probably the king of León - is so much less than the whole known truth as to mislead. Those courts were ritual celebrations of territorial security - in which the incipient delegation of burghers was no more (or less) representative than the attendance of the king's prelates and barons. Nor was the summons of elect without precedent in 1188. What was towards the middle of the twelfth century was the conceptual clustering

of local association, liberties, and election - a clustering that only gradually and obscurely made its way into the practice of secular consultation. It may well have had its trial runs in the administrative practice of the Church, a practice of which Hexter makes no mention. Indeed, if one seeks to understand the uniquely Western origins of modern representation - although given our present state of ignorance that inquiry seems to me premature - one must look to the Church, and perhaps not even far beyond. It was there that classical ideas of public interest, obligation and corporate identity were revived and put to the service of new debates over spheres of constitutional power. Only more gradually did such debates - or, more exactly, politics - become common in lay assemblies. And the circumstances in which all of these (and other) changes took place are not only poorly understood, but have to this day never been addressed as a historical problem. Only "corporatist" historians have thought in large terms of a transformation of social régime, but that transformation has yet to be described concretely, dated and explained, let alone placed in its cultural context.

This is a more difficult problem than that of the origins of parliament precisely because it is a problem of cultural change, not of institutional origins. Contemporary testimonies, as so often, seem to face backward, not forward - and they tell too reticently, yet not quite inaudibly, of the shifts that interest us. With these remarks I cease, of course, to criticize Professor Hexter, whose lucid account merely builds on a foundation of underexamined assumptions about the peculiarities of Western experience. But the original nature of those peculiarities will have to be identified with more precision than has yet been applied before they can be held to characterize "the birth of Western freedom".

T. N. BISSON.

4 Indian Rock Path, Berkeley, California 94707.

Professing Literature

Sir, - Donald H. Reiman (Letters, January 7) credits the New Criticism, and in particular its "Fugitive / Agrarian wing", with bringing about the present woeful state of the profession. He narrows his sights even further: the only members of that wing he names are R. P. Warren, the distinguished poet and novelist, and myself - though I was never a member of the Fugitive group nor one of the original Agrarians.

They badly damaged the study of literature, so Reiman's account runs, by sharply constricting the accepted canon of literary works, by squeezing the joy out of reading literature and by diverting students from the study of the great writers into a barren study of literary theory. Worse still, the New Critics raised up a generation of theorists such as Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman, Harold Bloom and Stanley Fish.

Mr Reiman suggests several ways by which the New Critics accomplished this feat: by begetting them (as "pedagogical fathers"), or by "bequeathing" to them a baleful legacy, or by causing them to suffer from stroke under the "blaze of the New Critical noon", or by reducing them to a "shell-shocked" condition.

I now know what it must feel like to be the innocent victim of a trumped-up patently false. The alleged progeny of the New Critics must feel, equally shocked and will be just as hot to deny any sonship. And why should they not? In spite of Reiman's assertions, the two groups have, as an examination will show, different blood-types and a different set of genes. Far from being by-blows of reprehensible New Critics, the newest theorists can very properly claim to be the legitimate offspring of certain gentlemen of France.

In seeing matters otherwise, Reiman has, in one regard at least, been helpful. Instead of setting up a straw-man New Critic to answer vague

charges, he has specified what the New Critics and the newest theorists have in common: under New Critical influence, he says, the newest theorists hold that a literary work must be regarded as "(1) the expression of an elite author and his psyche (a strong poet agonizes, in Bloom's terminology); or (2) its linguistic representation - although given our present state of ignorance that inquiry seems to me premature - one must look to the Church, and perhaps not even far beyond. It was there that classical ideas of public interest, obligation and corporate identity were revived and put to the service of new debates over spheres of constitutional power. Only more gradually did such debates - or, more exactly, politics - become common in lay assemblies. And the circumstances in which all of these (and other) changes took place are not only poorly understood, but have to this day never been addressed as a historical problem. Only "corporatist" historians have thought in large terms of a transformation of social régime, but that transformation has yet to be described concretely, dated and explained, let alone placed in its cultural context.

In this present instance, however, I am not concerned to state my disagreements with Paul de Man, but to call attention to what I am sure is a more serious problem: the ignorance of the relation of the New Critics, whoever they are (for Reiman has failed to provide a roster of them), to the newest developments in literary theory.

Perhaps Reiman's greatest howler is to make his chief villains the members of the "Fugitive / Agrarian wing". The most able literary critics of that group are John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Donald Davidson and Robert Penn Warren. They are all poets, essayists and historians. They enjoyed literature and have communicated that enjoyment to their students and readers. They have been deeply concerned to preserve the cultural tradition of the West. Reiman has quite mistaken their characters and aims.

Since Mr Reiman has focused on the Yale English Department, it is very strange that he omits any reference to the late W. K. Wimsatt, who, along with René Wellek, was a powerful literary theorist at Yale throughout the "New Critical noon". At least one owes much to his conception of literary criticism. I suggest a reading of his posthumous collection of critical essays entitled *The Day of the Leopards*.

Mr Reiman begins his letter by telling us that it sometimes boggles his mind "to discover how little understood American life and culture are in Great Britain". His point may be well taken, but I must add that my mind boggles at how little Reiman, though an American, understands that enormous, still undefined X which so many call the New Criticism. It is apparently as elusive as the snark, and I predict that, if it is ever hunted down, it will turn out to be another boojum.

CLEANTH BROOKS.

Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut 06520.

Sir, - It remains unclear to me why your American correspondents should suppose that "Professing Literature" (December 10, 1982) was under some obligation to represent the range of views about critical theory in the United States, or anywhere else. A literary journal is surely less concerned with seeking the representative than with finding the best.

G. S. Rousseau, however, poses a more important question when he asks why theory has "swallowed up" literature in the past decade, and not only literature (Letters, January 28). It is indeed astonishing that a rebash of Victorian-Edwardian ideas (to use provincial British terms) - from the Marxism of the 1840s, through Nietzsche and Derrida to Saussure's lectures of around 1910 - should ever have been successfully passed off as the

latest thing. I can think of no significant linguistic discovery of the last half-century that depends on Saussure, who died in 1913 and whose writings were dismissed by Bloomfield in America, and by Ogden and Richards in England, in the 1920s; and yet he is confidently hailed by critical theorists as the founder of modern linguistics. Our avant-garde is old hat.

Two conceivable explanations. One is the charm of the short cut: theory promises not just answers, as literary historians do, but The Answer. All very tempting to a faithless and secular age. The other is the gregarious instinct. The historian sits in a lonely room, and his specialist findings may be of interest to only a handful of readers; but a theorist can enjoy the camaraderie and hurly-burly of private debates and public conferences. Theory can be a Lonely Hearts Club. No wonder if its arguments, simply as arguments, are not very good, and no wonder if it does not wish to be told why.

GEORGE WATSON.

St John's College, Cambridge.

Subsidizing Literature

Sir, - Thank goodness someone is still hammering away at the appalling arrogance and incompetence of the Arts Council's Literature Panel; and that Robert Hewison continues to give the matter publicity (Behind the Lines, January 28).

What is the one art in which this country is universally acknowledged to excel? It is of course literature. Yet the Literature Panel continues to receive a pittance (has it reached 2 per cent of the overall budget yet?) and even that tiny sum is underspent and often diverted to dubious uses. I don't know a single reputable poet - and I'm sure the same goes for novelists and playwrights - who isn't filled with anger and despair at the shoddy way we are treated. For some reason the idea of putting money into the hands of a writer (as opposed to no institution) scares bureaucrats witless. Executants - actors, producers, singers -

conductors, museum directors - are showered with honours and paid fat, sometimes astronomical, salaries; the primary creators, without whom not one of these mediators would be in work, are patted on the back with a few hundreds or thousands and tossed the odd bauble. (Rois Shaw and Strong, for example, get knightships, while Larkin and Hughes get OBEs. Will future generations approve the judgments implicit in those awards?) Grants of £8,000-£10,000 (what family man or woman can live on less?) should be available to at least thirty or forty writers a year, every year. When I read that nearly £200,000 of the literature budget remains unspent, it makes me weep. I begin to wonder whether Charles Osborne's "good housekeeping" is of the same order as Miss Havisham's. Why were off the New Review and *Bananas* killed off when money of this order was ready and waiting to be used? Why must many good writers fill their days with hack work in order to survive? If London can't or won't spend its budget, why won't they at least devote it to the regions, where we are crying out for money to spend on worthwhile causes? (One small but typical example. Anne Stevenson, currently living in Sunderland, has no income at present, and no prospect of one, unless she gives up writing poetry and takes a teaching post. Why can't we give her a grant? Isn't she good enough?)

Here in the north we have begun a campaign to get literature's abysmally low share of Northern Arts' budget increased beyond its present 3 per cent. We meet, of course, with every variety of resistance - not least the argument that what's good enough for London is good enough for us (i.e. 2-3 per cent). At Northern Arts' not only does literature receive less than the traditional big spenders like music and drama, it actually receives half that devoted to community arts, three-quarters of that devoted to photography, and only a little more

than that devoted to crafts. All those aspiring writers, good poets, Bloodaxe Books, Corgi, MidNAG, etc) and good music (e.g. *Stand, Poetry Durham, Women, etc*).

The greatest irony, to my mind, is this sorry state of affairs, in which precisely those whom one might expect to be sympathetic to literature - librarians, teachers, journalists, English academics, arts officials - who in practice the most entrenched in opposition to the notion of paying actual cash in a writer's hand, take an official position of some kind, with proper job description, or even salary and pension are safe. Do they or a Bunting and, unless you are lucky enough to find a Harriet Weaver, you can eat cake, while Osborne and I can get on with our work, or send one official off on a tour abroad to promote the interests of Virginia Woolf.

It is surely time that the Literature Panel clean in this matter. The fact that they are in the business of helping contemporary literature, or they are not. If they disapprove in principle the honesty to say so, and shut up, or vote themselves a more honest lot, such as the Bookshop Panel.

Let I be thought to have some personal axe to grind, let me add that am one of the fortunate few a possession both of a reasonable salary and (almost) sufficient time in which to write, and hence am not a candidate for subsidy.

WILLIAM SCAMMELL

Chairman, Literature Panel, North-east Arts, Clare Cottage, Belvoir, Cuckermouth, Cumbria.

Authoritarianism and Democracy

Sir, - Geoffrey Marshall represents me in his review of my book *Capitalist Democracy in India* (January 28). One instance will suffice. I say in the book that so strong has been the traditional framework of politics in India that it has been the post-war years, and not the post-war years, that have seen the rise of a new type of authoritarianism. I also say that "it is in this latter respect significant that the post-war notable figure on the populist right is the post-war years, namely Mr E. S. Powell, should have been an authoritarian constitutionalist" (p. 52). Marshall chooses to read this as a suggestion by me that "there exists a 'responsible' between Parliamentary and extreme right-wing authoritarian views". This is an absurd idea and improper for Marshall to tar me with it. Much else in his review is on this level.

RALPH MILBAND

29 Edis Street, London NW1.

'The Architecture of Wren'

Sir, - In his welcome review of my book *The Architecture of Wren* (December 24) Alan Hollinghurst makes me for "not a mention of St Martin's within-Ludgate". Indeed I must apologise for its exclusion from the book but other admirers of that remarkable church will be glad to find it on pp. 60 and 62 and Plates 97-8.

The essays in the *Whitechapel* catalogue could not have been included in the book for two reasons. They would significantly have added to the price of the book, and in any case they represent work done after the publication of the book. The book is everything under one cover - a miscellany.

KERRY DOWNES

Department of History, University of Reading, Reading.

The Asiatic Mode of Production

Sir, - The debate on the Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP), which Ernest Gellner refers to in his review of Stephen P. Dunn's book on the subject (January 14), is a very complex and the review, though interesting and informative, tends to underestimate its complexity. I would be grateful if I might be allowed to add a few comments.

Gellner thinks that the idea of a variant AMP is incompatible with Marxism. I believe this to be inaccurate in two respects. For one thing, Marxism is primarily concerned with the analysis and critique of capitalism, whether that social system came into existence as a result of immutable historical laws, or through a number of "near-miraculous mutations". The AMP might be considered such a mutation, or it might be the fact that it supposedly represents the last and highest of a number of universal historical stages. But it is far from impossible to squeeze the AMP into the succession of social formations, as historians in the German Democratic Republic have done here, the "Oriental class society" (*orientalische Klassengesellschaft*) is placed as the second universal stage, after primitive communism and before slavery, in a number of authoritative works.

To Gellner it is a matter of difference whether "Asiatic" societies ever existed: the AMP he tells us "may or may not be the best way of describing" certain riverine societies. But this is surely to evade the central issue. The truth is that the typical Oriental society, characterised by lack of private property and, consequently, by stagnation and despotism, is nothing but a Western mutation; as evidenced by the young Engels's history notes, the Asiatic, should be attached to, say, China or India. The idea that none of the labels might fit, and that there might exist specific social formations which Marx never mentioned, seems not to have occurred to them. Until it does, they will be unable to incorporate into their theories the progress made in the study of non-European history in the hundred years since Marx's death, and their interpretations will remain inferior to those of Western macro-history, Marxist or non-Marxist.

JENS RAHBEK RASMUSSEN, Institute of History, University of Copenhagen, Njalsgade 102, DK-2300 Copenhagen S.

'Despite the Welfare State'

Sir, - Rudolf Klein's incisive review of *Despite the Welfare State* by Muriel Brown and Nicola Madge (December 17, 1982), followed by the methodological vignette from Michael Posner (Letters, December 31, 1982), have recently been brought to my attention.

I have two closely associated comments on the question: Why do social scientists keep on failing to make their mark on policy issues? First, the clues leading to a reason for the general policy ineptitude of the social scientist are almost as universal (particularly in the Western democracies) as the question itself. In short, British social scientists are not alone in this matter; they have company in America and elsewhere. Second, attempts to solve this "Rubik's Cube" often stagnate at the level of scientism, over whether social scientists ought to be objective, as in natural science, and test "hypotheses" or do qualitative research. The glaring fact is that hard data are not lacking; rather, the problem is the learned unwillingness of the social scientists to examine them without value biases. The endemic distrust of the State, coupled with an elitist view often confined within liberal academic, set these so-

cial scientists apart from the masses, resulting in a moralist position reminiscent of Dostoevsky's apostolic injunction in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Consequently, this unwillingness impedes them from making programmatic policy recommendations.

As Brown and Madge painfully document, the poverty researchers were not asked to evaluate various causes of transmitted poverty (which we in the United States have come to term "intergenerational poverty"), but to examine the objective conditions in the perpetuation of poverty. The possible distrust of the policy-makers of social scientists may reach the level of scorn if we, the social scientists, continue to force "our" answer on the rest of the society.

ASOKE BASU.

Hoover Institution, Stanford, California 94305.

Nutrition and Health

Sir, - Mary Douglas seems intent on creating her own mythology in her Viewpoint, "Foodstuff" (November 5, 1982), which I have only just read on my return from a period abroad. Let me reassure readers, from a considerable experience, that "nutritional materialism" is by no means as dominant in the thinking of health professionals as she makes out. And for such greater understanding as there is we owe much to her and her fellow social scientists.

My object in writing, however, is to dispel another of Professor Douglas's myths, again advanced without supporting evidence - that nutrition education is a disheartening failure. There are a number of things wrong with modern Western diet, but progress is being made, and good news is not so common. For America (her present abode) Mary Douglas may care to look at the *Proceedings of the Conference on the Decline of Coronary Heart Disease Mortality* (US Dept of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, 1979). Information on this country is readily available in the invaluable *Reports of the National Food Survey* (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, HMSO, annually).

Three examples for Britain. Between 1970 and 1980, consumption of wholemeal bread trebled and that of brown bread almost doubled. Sugar intake, a long-term concern of nutrition education, continued and maintained its long decline. Most encouraging is the recent shift among "visible fats". Butter purchases fell considerably between 1975 and 1980, and were largely replaced by margarine, not the traditional hard variety but the new "soft" margarines that mostly contain fewer saturates and more polyunsaturates. In consequence, the total picture of fats consumption in this country is beginning to show some improvement. Moreover, all these changes are evident, if unequally, in the four income groups of the *Food Survey*, among the poor; says Mary Douglas again, and not merely the well-to-do - an unusual situation in public health that has not yet been adequately studied. How much credit for these achievements is due to nutrition education, among the multiple social influences at work, is impossible to say with any accuracy. Plausibly, we may claim some of the credit.

Of course, doctors and teachers, dietitians, health education people, home economists, nurses et al are never satisfied. Among the many obstacles to further progress that have to be overcome are the scarcity of palatable low-fat milk (readily available in North America), the relative expense of more wholesome alternatives (the market forces), wholly inadequate labelling of food (how many mothers even now appreciate the quantity of sugar they feed their children in popular soft drinks?), and unwholesome pressures by advertising.

Concern with such nutritional mal-

ters is complementary to, and underpins the psychological, an enjoyable and satisfying diet is the common aim. The role of food as comfort, in communication and social relations, its symbolic meanings, in no way conflicts with a diet that rectifies today's prevalent nutritional errors.

J. N. MORRIS.

Departments of Human Nutrition and Community Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London WC1.

James Joyce

Sir, - Matthew Hodgart's review of *The James Joyce Songbook* (January 14) rightly praises a useful and handsome companion to the would-be silent reader. The reviewer is on safe ground in asserting that the musical allusions in *Finnegans Wake* (especially III, i) are more broadcast than Ruth Bauerle indicates. In fact, a songbook which lays claim to comprehensiveness would serve doubtful purposes and run into several volumes.

Considering his strictures on its coverage of *Finnegans Wake*, therefore, it is odd to note his remark that "it is safe to conclude that *Ulysses* is now completely understood as far as musical allusions are concerned". A small illustration from *Dubliners*, a prelude by comparison, will illustrate. From the story, "A Little Cloud":

"Very well, then," said Ignatius Gallaher, "let us have another one as a *deco an doris* - that's good vernacular for a small whisky, I believe."

Although this reference fails to register on Ruth Bauerle's scale, it hardly requires an encyclopedic knowledge of song or an *arsene of ingenuity* to see the point of the allusion to the Scots song, considering that "Gallaher" originally made reference to "a foreign/Scots mercenary", that the sentence gives us the British spelling of the drink, and that the various elements in the song have analogues in Joyce's story. I suggest that there are scores of such instances of oblique musical allusion in each of Joyce's works that have not been noted by the commentators (Hodgart and Worthington, Bowen, and now Bauerle).

But Mr Hodgart exceeds the bounds of his charge when citing Joyce's hatred of violence as directed primarily or solely to the perpetrators of the Phoenix Park murders or the Fenian "terrorism" (Hodgart's word), and implicitly the IRA today. Joyce always regarded the British administrative and military presence as the fundamental source of political violence in the Ireland of his day. Perhaps, therefore, Hodgart would care to infer which "recent events" in Northern Ireland "would not have surprised" James Joyce, considering the roles and actions Joyce assigned H. Rumbold and Private Compton and Carr in *Ulysses*.

COLLIN OWENS.

Department of English, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia 22030.

Sir, - In the new edition of his splendid biography of Joyce, Richard Ellmann tells us (p. 51) that the young man, translated, Horace's "O fons Bandusiae". Lines 3-5 are quoted thus:

The morrow thee a kid shall bring Boding of rivalry and sweet Love in his swelling form.

Before this becomes the starting point of another thesis ("Form in the Juvenilia of James Joyce"), may I point out that someone has made a slip in transcribing the manuscript? What Joyce wrote, of course, was "horns" (Horace's *cornibus*), which suggests a different line of research.

NALL RUDD.

Department of Classics, University of Bristol, Willis Memorial Building, Queens Road, Bristol.

Rochester and Quarles

Sir, - May I add a comment and a small correction to Keith Walker's letter on this subject of September 10, 1982? The interesting similarity between Rochester's "Upon Nothing" and Quarles's *Divine Emblems* 4.13 is not simply the use of the rhymed triplet but of the rhymed triplet concluding with an Alexandrine. These are to the best of my knowledge the only seventeenth-century poems which use this particular stanza pattern. It is also 4.13 (not 2.15 of *Divine Fancies*) which I would see as containing "germ" for "Upon Nothing" - notably in the appended quotation from Augustine. (I follow this thing, I pursue that, but I am filled with nothing", and in the form of the opening question, "Where is that Good, which wise men please to call / The Chiefest? Dost thou there any such befall / Within man's reach? Or is there such a Good at all?" - for which Rochester's poem could easily be an ironic answer. However, the most important source is, of course, the long tradition of paradoxical eulogies of nothingness which is described in Rosalie Colie's *Paradoxical Epidemic*.

HAROLD LOVE.

Department of English, Monash University, Melbourne.

'A Trip to Scarborough'

Sir, - Lest an unwary reader, relying on the authority of your pages, should be misled by Hugh Haughton's remarks on Alan Ayckbourn's *A Trip to Scarborough* (Commentary, January 7), perhaps the record should be set straight. Neither Miss Hayden nor Mr Tunbally Cluney, once Haughton "begins life in Colley Cibber's *Love's Last Shift* (1696)", and in Vanbrugh's *The Relapse*, where they first appear, it is not Loveless but Young Fashion who impersonates his older brother (Lord Foppington).

EUGENE M. WATTH.

Department of English, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut 06520.

Etymologies

Sir, - Your recent correspondence on the word "squaddy" (possibly "swaddy") reminds of a question I have long been meaning to ask of someone more lexicographically learned than I. On page 1751 of Webster's *New International Dictionary* (Second edn, unabridged) there appears the following entry:

squaddy. A form found in Motley's *United Netherlands* resulting from a misreading or mis-copying of "baddy," a term of uncertain meaning. In a letter of T. Digges (1585-86):

CHARLES ELLIOTT.

Alfred A. Knopf, 201 East 50th Street, New York, NY 10022.

The Enfield Find

Sir, - Much as I hate to come between a man and his doggerel, I Ellmann tells us (p. 51) that the young man, translated, Horace's "O fons Bandusiae". Lines 3-5 are quoted thus:

The morrow thee a kid shall bring Boding of rivalry and sweet Love in his swelling form.

I am afraid Mr Korn's Chesteronian sabre-rattler must give way to a more eschatological theme: the invention of the Cross, perhaps? It's a dream of a road.

LESLIE WEBSTER.

British Museum, London WC1.

1982-1-15-50

Cognizing cultures

Maurice Bloch

DAN SPERBER

Le Savoir des anthropologues: trois essais
141pp. Paris: Hermann. 70fr.
2 7036 5945 5

This new book by Dan Sperber is a most important contribution to anthropological theory, even if its importance is not immediately evident. The reason for this is that the book consists of three essays published elsewhere in a somewhat less elaborate and less clear form. As a result, the connecting thread between them has to be reconstructed by the reader, who needs to ask himself the question: what do these three essays have in common and in what way does this shared content differ from other views of what anthropologists have learnt as a result of their studies?

The short introduction offers some

limited help in answering this question. For the most part it consists of a challenge to the common view among anthropologists that the sheer accumulation of information about exotic societies will of itself form a basis for scientific knowledge concerning the nature of man. This is the negative part of Sperber's argument; the positive side has to be guessed from the short history of anthropology which is outlined in the first few pages of the book. Sperber stresses how, as a result of the explicit bias of anthropologists, and because of their focus on method rather than on theory, anthropology and cognitive psychology have grown apart. Anthropologists have concerned themselves with endlessly demonstrating the variability of culture as though this negative conclusion could be turned into positive knowledge, while the psychologists have believed that they can come to grips with thought-processes only as they occur in experimental situations. Sperber implicitly deplores this state of affairs: "It is not impossible that the

anthropologists of the future will see themselves less as intellectual heirs of the sociologists, and more of the psychologists, less in the tradition of the philosophy of law and more in the tradition of the philosophy of mind".

If such a remark suggests that we are about to read a general systematic work of theory, this is not what we in fact have here; rather we are presented with a preliminary clearing of the way for such a work. The first essay is an attempt to deal with the central middle of modern anthropology: the relation of the observations made by anthropologists, the need to communicate these observations intelligibly; and the attempt to propose scientific generalizations. Sperber calls the first two of these activities ethnography and the third anthropology, and he argues against the view that the two can be performed in union, if only because the terms used by ethnographers, related as they are to terms used by the peoples under study, cannot, however they are manipulated, form the basis of scientific hypotheses. These last two

are seen by Sperber inevitably to involve generalizations concerning human cognition. This chapter is an excellent piece of work which should be read and taken to heart by other anthropologists, though its positive recommendations for a non-ethnographic anthropology is indicated only tentatively.

The second essay may be seen as the least satisfactory of the three, but at the same time as the most constructive. For the most part it is a welcome attack on the foolish theory, often implied but never properly argued, that people in different cultures live in totally different worlds, a theory which bears the label of "cultural relativism". In presenting his refutation of it, Sperber comes face to face with the fact that anthropologists have to recognize that they deal with different types of knowledge and that the nature of these types of knowledge must be analysed before we can say that a particular people believes or knows such and such. Objections to the vagueness of the notion of "belief" are familiar, but Sperber does more as he tries to identify a form of knowledge somewhere between metaphor and literal proposition, by talking of what he calls "semi-propositions". I do not believe that such a notion can possibly stand up to close analysis, but what it does do, and this is immensely valuable, is to identify the area in anthropology that we must study with the kind of psychological precision which is here stipulated.

The final essay in *Le Savoir des anthropologues* is an assessment of the

work of Lévi-Strauss. As such it is severe, but extremely helpful, and recommended to all who are too, however, Sperber is something more, and this is what the final chapter with the title of "The final chapter" is about. His conclusion is that the role of Lévi-Strauss's contributions to anthropology has anchored the study of culture variation in a positive psychology theory which is universal but at the same time explains the production of an infinite variety of cultures. Sperber does not find Lévi-Strauss's solution the problem acceptable or even his thought-out, but his value is that it points the way to what, for him, is a proper anthropological work should be like.

This book is therefore preliminary to a re-defined anthropology which would face up to its scientific tasks unequivocally and would therefore link up with other sciences, especially with psychology, in the way others have linked up with biology. I myself largely in sympathy with Sperber's briefly suggested scheme, although I do not believe that turning anthropology into a branch of psychology is a sufficient solution. Rather it must be a bridge between psychology and a genuinely scientific sociology, which unfortunately both seem to exist. What is most attractive about the book, however, is Sperber's determination not to do what some modern anthropologists have resigned to doing, faced by the intractability of their subject; that is, give up.

The evangelizing agent

Peter Gathercole

JAMES CLIFFORD

Person and Myth: Maurice Leenhardt in the Melanesian World
270pp. University of California Press. £22.95.
0 520 04247 6

This is an admirable and timely book. James Clifford, who teaches in the History of Consciousness programme at the University of California, Santa Cruz, provides the first detailed biographical study in English of Maurice Leenhardt (1878-1954), the remarkable French Protestant missionary and anthropologist, who worked for many years in New Caledonia, in the south-west Pacific. Leenhardt's career was far from that of the conventional academic. He spent over half his adult life in the field, being a leading independent-minded evangelist and critic of French colonialist attitudes. With the friendship and encouragement of Mauss and Lévy-Bruhl, in the 1930s he began teaching at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris, but nonetheless he remained until his death

his deep involvement in mission affairs.

Leenhardt was, and remains, an ambiguous figure in anthropology. Firmly empirical in his interests (his six books and many articles on the ethnography of New Caledonia make it one of the best documented islands of Oceania) and suspicious of sweeping theoretical paradigms, his work was deeply rooted in his own experience and faith. Clifford even says that "his ultimate goal was to discover, through comparative analysis, the essential forms of the religious experience, whenever and wherever they occurred." It was not surprising that he often forsook the convention of the ethnographic present in his writing, and deliberately studied a changing society where he was fully conscious of his role as an evangelizing agent. Such a stance was unusual among Oceanic ethnographers of his day, and for many years his work had little influence within the predominantly Anglo-American world of Pacific anthropology. It was not until 1979 that one of his major books appeared in an English translation, namely *Do Kamo: Person and Myth in the Melanesian World*. Clifford's book will help alone for

this neglect. He shows, for example, how, later in life, Leenhardt became profoundly interested in New Caledonian myth, religion and aesthetics in their own terms. This led him - and the process was one inevitable outcome of his years of study in the field - into considerable disagreement with the views of Lévy-Bruhl: primitive man possessed a category of feeling specifically manifested in relations with the supernatural. Leenhardt, however, had proposed in his analysis of *mythe vécu* that the archaic supernatural was merely the mythic aspect of ordinary nature. Thus, a Melanesian's relations with the supernatural (gods, totems, spirits) need not be fundamentally different from his relations with nature (objects, landscape, animals). These relations, when instrumental, were participative. Lévy-Bruhl had kept this general "fluidity" of participatory thought analytically separate from the special "category" of feelings appropriate to the "supernatural". Leenhardt questioned the separation and suggested to his friend "that the affective category was merely a logical interpretation by which another name is given to participation".

Indeed, in Clifford's account, Leenhardt emerges as a member, with Lévy-Bruhl and Mauss, of the trio which gave distinctive shape to French anthropology before the dominance of Lévi-Strauss. And, although no structuralist, Leenhardt, as Clifford shows, had certain affinities with the latter. "In practice, both thinkers had a capacity for overlooking the boundaries of their own programmes and prescriptions." In fact, in some respects Leenhardt can be viewed as a very contemporary figure in Pacific anthropology. He refused to see his ethnography as within a closed world sharply different from western society, but saw it as one actually mediated by his Christianity into modern form. His concern for the ambiguous position of the anthropologist able to impose his interpretation of a culture on the people affected, is one widely echoed today. At the same time, though, he maintained his support for the "rayonnement de la culture française".

Clifford writes with a command of his sources and a power of style which comes close to emulating the power of his subject. Through his subtle evocation of Leenhardt's place and time, he puts him not so much in a Melanesian world, as in two other juxtaposed worlds: that of the canoques of New Caledonia, and that of an emerging French professional anthropology. In this sense, Clifford does not, I think, make clear the significance of Leenhardt's ethnography for Melanesia as a whole (and, today, the latter is a very loosely defined concept). He has ensured that no "English-speaking" anthropologist can plead ignorance of Maurice Leenhardt's career or significance.

Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh: Anthropological Research in North-East India
185pp. Garland/Vikas. £12.95.
0 7059 1367 1

Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh is the latest instalment in a unique oeuvre. Most anthropologists are content with personal experience of two or three exotic cultures, but Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf has published full-scale monographs on six different South Asian peoples, as well as making substantial pioneering contributions on a number of others. Probably no one will ever again attempt such breadth.

After a brief expedition to the Mnyong in 1937, Professor Fürer-Haimendorf returned to the eastern Himalayas in 1944-5, when the threat from the Japanese stimulated official interest in the hitherto unadministered tribes. After a quarter of a century as head of the Anthropology Department at the School of Oriental and African Studies he has recently been undertaking a vigorous programme of revisiting to his old stamping grounds, and the present work is essentially an updated account of the Nishis and Miris. Other peoples of the province are also mentioned now and again, the final chapter reporting findings from 1980 on the Buddhist groups around the old trans-Himalayan trade route just east of Bhutan.

Following on from his *Himalayan Traders: Life in Highland Nepal* (1975), the author gives considerable space to patterns of trade. The "salt divide" makes its expected appearance: all along the range the hill peoples, unless they used plant-ash, had to choose between importing the commodity from Tibet or from the Plains. Particularly interesting too is the quasi-aesthetic attitude of the 1940s, as they were called in the 1940s to the clapper-less Tibetan bells which were used as currency. Believing them to be the work of gods, they exchanged them with great ceremony and gave the most valuable specimens individual names and a sex (one is reminded of Malinowski's famous account of the *kula* valuables in the Trobriand Islands.)

Obviously the changes that have

taken place during thirty-five years have been immense. The border with China has been closed, while what have been shifted to make use of the new roads, guide-lines (rather than ones) have been drafted for the administration of justice by local councils. The state government has helped in reorganizing festivals and fostered cultural unity, and the old cult of the Sun and Moon are being put new meaning in reaction against the condemnation of "devil-worship" by Nishis who have been converted to Christianity at mission schools in the nearby plains.

Criticisms of Fürer-Haimendorf are by now familiar: a question of knowledge of (some of) the languages, a tendency to exaggerate the isolation of the peoples he studied, an avoidance of the challenges of theory and interpretation. In the book too he fails to discuss the ethnographic language problem in this chapter on family structure, ignores the vocabulary the people themselves use to conceptualize their relationships. Titled *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh* it does not mention the French for "hill" - *impdi* rather than *ampo*, one of the titles the Tibetan as *khral*, not *khral*. Again, the Nishis of 1944, introduced as pristine, are "unaffected by any contact with the economically more advanced populations". But they have had economic contacts of various kinds, witness the response by the Nishis to the 1920s demand for rubber, and the long-established payments made by the authorities in the plains. Moreover, when the Tibeto-Burman-speaking Nishis came to marriage by capture as *lut*, the use of the loan-word *khral* ("loot" comes from Hindi) is a subtle cultural influence?

Although difficult questions seldom asked, as a synthesis of his own observations *Highlanders of Arunachal Pradesh* will have long value for the scholars who examine the book (making use of the good volume of Indian publications on the province). General readers, however, the copious misprints, well as the and well-illustrated account of the to which very few foreigners are allowed access. Encouraging ecological devastation suffered by Western half of the range, analysed in J. S. Lal (ed.) *Himalayas: Aspects of Change*, seems to be still some way off.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

From HUMINT to SIGINT

Walter Laqueur

The Role Kapelle: The CIA History of Soviet Intelligence and Espionage Networks in Western Europe 1936-45.
Washington: University Publications of America.

HANS RUDOLF FUHRER

Splionage gegen die Schweiz
184pp. Frauenfeld, Switzerland:
Schweizer Militär Zeitung.

LOUISE BERNIKOW

Abel
30pp. New York: Ballantine Books.

KIRILL CHENKIN

Obolnik verkh nogrami
30pp. Frankfurt: Posev.

WILLIAM HOOD

Mole
317pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£3.95
0 777 78191 X

PATRICK BRESLEY

Room 40: British Naval Intelligence 1914-18
338pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95.
0 241 00640 0

JAMES BAMPFORD

The Puzzle Palace: A report on America's most secret agency
465pp. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
\$16.95.

A few weeks before the outbreak of the Second World War, the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* reported that some 60,000 highly qualified spies were swimming all over Europe, most of them accomplished linguists thoroughly trained in intelligence techniques, and with unlimited financial resources at their disposal. Today we know that the Second World War, in Ronald Levin's phrase, was not a HUMINT war but a SIGINT war (though photo-reconnaissance was a part of the "fifth column"); it existed but its contribution was exaggerated. There has not stood still: in the early 1940s reconnaissance satellites began to play an increasingly important role, but during the past decade it has been accepted that while the so-called "technical" means of "intelligence" produce a great deal of "raw intelligence", they have obvious political scientists predicted that with sensors and computers a global early warning system was about to emerge, everyone would know everything about everyone else. Meanwhile, however, the number of intelligence satellites has not decreased. Today the acquisition of high-technology secrets is an obvious task for HUMINT - heads of intelligence priorities and, on the other hand, the role of "agents of influence" has acquired a certain importance. Thus, the period of human intelligence does not seem to be over and the descriptions of the battles between Smiley's and Karla's people within a certain, albeit very modest, verisimilitude.

There still remain some major questions marks about human intelligence in the Second World War. P. H. Hinsley's official history is so far the most complete. To give just one example: it is known from German files that a German NCO, Kurt Koenig, was parachuted three times from Britain into Germany. Twice he succeeded in making his way back via Spain, the third time he was caught. There is no reference to this or similar cases in the British files so far declassified. The Americans had few successes in this field, except perhaps in the last year of the war when it no longer greatly mattered. The Russians have exaggerated the role of some of their agents and belittled or obfuscated that of others. Sorge could have been of great importance had Stalin believed, which more often than not he did not. The "Red Orchestra" provided useful items but the most valuable information came from Switzerland, many of those involved, such as

Alexander Foote, Alexander Rado, Otto Puentner and, most recently, "Sonja" Kuczynski have written their memoirs. What they have to say is of interest, but their rôle was mainly that of conveying information or co-ordinating its collection.

Infinitely more important as a source was Rudolf Roessler ("Lucy"), the German émigré who had settled in Lucerne. Roessler kept silent, or made misleading statements about his own sources, up to the time of his death. Even the "Director" in Moscow did not know the identity of these sources. Many theories have been aired about the real names of "Olga", "Werther" and the other highly placed German sources quoted in Roessler's messages to Moscow. According to some, Roessler had excellent connections with Hitler's headquarters, dating back to his earlier life; according to others, the "moles" were on the general staff. One author has claimed that two teletypists provided the information, while another has argued that Churchill used Roessler to feed selected "Ultra" material to Stalin. Yet others have reached the conclusion that "Olga" and "Werther" never existed and that Roessler invented most of his material.

Careful study of Roessler's signals shows that half, perhaps more, of his material could have been produced by an intelligent reader of German newspapers, which were freely available in Switzerland (Somerset Maugham, in *Ashenden*, described similar practices in the First World War); but there were also some very detailed items on the whereabouts of certain divisions or the German order of battle. Roessler's information was not always accurate, but frequently it was and the question remains where he obtained it. Some ten years ago the CIA addressed itself to this question; a history of the Red Orchestra and the "Red Three" (as the Swiss operation was called) was commissioned for in-house use. *The Role Kapelle* (no editor's or author's name is given), an apparently somewhat expurgated study, is based, *inter alia*, on careful analysis of 332 messages from "Lucy" to Moscow which were either intercepted or found after the arrest of the members of the network. The material in the CIA history is not always up to date or carefully checked; it includes contradictory statements and unlikely allegations. The fact that someone's name appeared in the messages to Moscow does not necessarily mean that he or she actually served as a witting or unwitting source. (This is true, for instance, with regard to the late Professor Max Horkheimer, better known to students of the Frankfurt School of critical philosophy than to students of espionage.) With all this the CIA history includes material which suggests a solution - probably the only possible solution - to the "Lucy" riddle. Roessler lived in Lucerne, he hardly ever left the city, he had no radio transmitter at his disposal, he did not get his information by way of telephone or through couriers - except perhaps occasionally. How, then, could he possibly receive up-to-date information which would be of operative use?

In fact, there was a line which led during those years from Hitler's headquarters in the German General Staff to the Base office of Swiss military intelligence. Established by the then Major Max Walbel it was known as the "Viking Line" and provided information of the highest importance; the identity of the source was known to only three people. Even present-day Swiss sources such as Colonel Kurt (*Nachrichtenzentrum Schweiz*, 1972) prefer not to name names; though he and some others seem to be in the know. Hans Rudolf Fuhrer in his excellent study, *Splionage gegen die Schweiz*, says in a footnote that it is not the task of a responsible Swiss historian to reveal the identity of the "Viking Line"; there is a "little" of silence. (It may be for similar reasons that the present writer failed in his search for the identity of the "German Industrialists", who in June 1942 transmitted to Switzerland the first authentic information about the Holocaust.)

Whatever the identity of "Viking"

there is no doubt that "Lucy" received information from this and a few other such sources, a fact which is not denied by Colonel Kurtz, who, however, plays down the extent of these "exchanges". The Swiss had perfectly valid reasons for helping the Russians at a time when their neutrality was threatened by the Germans rather than the Russians. But the information was carefully "laundered", especially with regard to the sources. Roessler himself, in all probability, did not know them. After the war Roessler once again tried his hand at espionage but failed miserably. The striking contrast between the excellence of his material in 1942-3 and the poor quality of his post-war attempts makes it all the more obvious that he served as a conduit for information others wished to convey. It is unlikely that the Swiss authorities will ever provide much help to historians trying to shed more light on this affair. Yet they are the only ones who could do so; there was precious little that went on in Switzerland during the war in this field which escaped their attention.

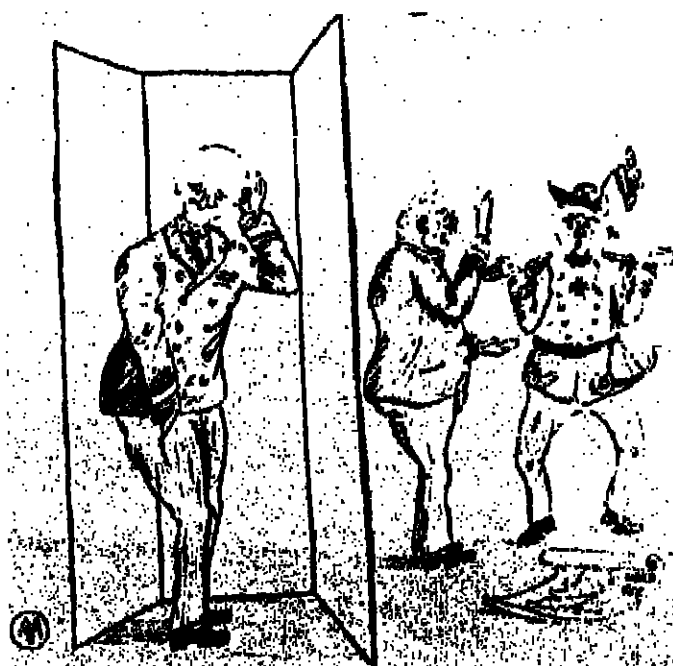
More is now known about the photographer named Emil Goldfus who was arrested by the US immigration service in the Latham Hotel in New York in 1957. Those who seized him addressed him as "Colonel"; they were not altogether unaware that he was a man of some consequence. The story of "Rudolf Abel" came out in part at his trial; it has been the subject of countless articles, of two books in English (including Donovan's *Stranger on a Bridge*), a lengthy Russian novel by Vadim Kozhevnikov and much more. "Abel" spent five years in prison before being exchanged, in 1962, for Francis Gary Powers, the luckless U-2 pilot shot down over the Soviet Union to the embarrassment of President Eisenhower.

Louise Bernikow's portrait of Abel was first published in 1970, and has now been re-issued; it is a study of both enormous diligence and even greater naivety. Abel, who had become part of the Brooklyn Heights scene, emerges as a most likable character, a sophisticated man, well versed in science as well as literature and the arts, technically gifted, almost a Renaissance man - a connoisseur of Degas, Villard and Kaethe Kollwitz, an avid reader of Arnold Hauser's *Sociology of Art*. He was a good friend and companion to the young and coming artists of the neighbourhood and something like a father-figure to them. True, he was not altogether perfect, he suffered from athlete's foot, wore dentures and once when one of his young painter friends was sketching a model, a voluptuous black lady with large breasts, Abel whispered that he wanted to engage in an activity unbecoming to a father-figure. Louise Bernikow does not take his activities as a spy very seriously. She believes that he probably read the *New York Times* and the *Scientific American* and packed all the stuff into microdotted messages to the Soviet Union. "Look at his face as he appears in a film. Sympathetic, someone you might want to know. Perhaps have dinner with. Talk about painting with."

In short, a "victim of the cold war", as much as an actor in it.

Abel was assisted by another spy, Lieutenant-Colonel Hayhanen, whose defection brought about Abel's downfall. Very much in contrast to his boss, Hayhanen emerges as a most unsavoury character, disorderly, unscrupulous, rather stupid, not fluent in English and also a heavy drinker. For the benefit of impatient readers a reference to his heavy drinking is made on almost every page. As Hayhanen makes his last appearance in Louise Bernikow's story it is said: "Thus he walked off into the distant oblivion reserved for turkeys and stoolies."

Such accounts raise fascinating questions: since espionage is a fact of international life, there is no room for expressions of moral indignation. Abel was a Soviet patriot, a believer in communism and in his way probably a charming man. As a dinner guest he was no doubt greatly preferable to



A performing audience. This cartoon of a naval officer listening to the enemy is taken from the programme cover of the "ID 25" concert on December 11, 1918. "Room 40", the Admiralty's codebreaking organization, became "ID 25" when it was officially incorporated into the Intelligence Division in 1917. The illustration comes from Patrick Beesly's book reviewed here.

Hayhanen, just as most found Alger Hiss a nicer man than Whittaker Chambers. The fact that Abel was also the faithful servant of Stalin and of one of the most repressive political systems of our time, does not bother the author unduly. All the opprobrium is reserved for Hayhanen, the defector. One recalls similar attitudes in Britain and since there are no old school ties in the United States, one ought to look for other explanations to understand the syndrome.

The climax of Louise Bernikow's account occurs in September 1967 when the author visited Moscow, together with one of Abel's former neighbours, a young painter, expecting that Abel would welcome them with open arms and discuss his double existence and the sociology of art. They were deeply saddened when it appeared that there was no way to contact Abel and that knowledgeable westerners in the Soviet capital expressed doubts about the sanity of the innocents from Brooklyn Heights.

Abel was feted in the Soviet Union after his release from prison. An article on the Second World War in *Priroda* mentioned "difficult but honourable tasks fulfilled by Abel in the struggle against the invader." "Gordon Lonsdale" describes in his autobiography how he met Abel in occupied Minsk in the uniform of a German *Abwehr* officer, an account, it subsequently appeared, about as truthful as the rest of that book.

Abel died in 1971 and since then it has become known that his real name was Willie Fischer. (During his arrest, and after his return to Moscow, he had given a dozen different accounts of his origins, all of them false.) The family is not unknown to students of the Russian revolutionary movement. According to an entry in the *Soviet Encyclopedia* (first edition), his father, Genrich Fischer (1871-1935), was a metal worker who knew Lenin in St. Petersburg in the 1890s. Fischer spent some time in prison and then in exile in the United States. He was born in 1903, Kirill Chenkin, who knew Abel in Spain in the 1930s, has taken the trouble to look up the issue of July 11, 1903 of the *Newcastle Daily Journal* which announced the happy event, and even tried to locate 140 Clara Street, where Willie was born; only to find that it no longer exists. The other Fischer published a little book in 1922 about his experiences in Britain but had few follow-up articles to say even about his two decades; their leaders were corrupt; the workers were far more interested in soccer, boxing and horse-racing than in politics. He disliked the pubs, the puritan British Sunday and the toothless children, and so he returned to Russia after the Revolution.

Willie, an "enthusiastic radio amateur", joined the GPU (the forerunner of the KGB) in 1927. He operated in various Western European countries (including, perhaps, Britain), but like many others in his profession lost his job in the purges of the late

1930s; the fact that his father knew Lenin may have saved his life. After Hitler's invasion, he was again given a job in his old company - to train wireless operators who were to be parachuted behind the German lines.

Abel, Chenkin reports, was a great believer in American constitutional practice and he thought it scandalous that the immigration authorities, not the FBI, had arrested him. But he was also sometimes critical of Soviet justice; he thought the eight years given to Greville Wynne ridiculous and said that capital punishment would have been far more appropriate. Chenkin believes that it might have been on Abel's suggestion that Gerald Brooke, released after five years, got another sentence of twenty years for having committed espionage in the camp, an original idea even by Soviet standards. Abel had no personal grudge against Brooke, he simply wanted to get his friends, the Kroegers, released from their British prison, and his approach worked.

Chenkin raises an interesting question: why did it take so long after his arrest to establish Abel's true identity? There was at the time one man in the United States who knew him well - Alexander Orlov ("the Swede") who had been his boss in Spain and elsewhere. Orlov was the highest-ranking Soviet intelligence defector ever to seek refuge in the United States. He had arrived in 1938 virtually unnoticed. No one in Washington showed any interest in him and so he had disappeared, without trace, into the American hinterland, afraid for his life, probably with good reason. But after 1953 he surfaced, having written a book which attracted much attention at the time. From then on American counter-espionage did not stop talking to him, but he apparently kept silent about Abel.

Ideological enthusiasts and true believers like Sorge and Orlov, we are told, no longer exist. The characters who have replaced them may know their profession but are unlikely to appear as heroes or villains in the novels of some future Joseph Conrad, or the factual accounts of a Louise Bernikow; they do not belong to a very interesting species.

Western intelligence services have always found HUMINT difficult in totalitarian societies; just as the Soviet Union was unsuccessful in its attempts to penetrate the Nazi Reich. On the other hand, the West has benefited from not a few Soviet and satellite "walk-ins" since the end of the Second World War; defectors for mercenary or ideological reasons. As we learn from William Hood's *Mole*, the motives of Major Popov, who served in Vienna in the 1950s, were mixed: he grew up in a village and knew all there was to know about the fate of Soviet peasants under Stalin; he also needed money for his mistress. It is an authentic story told in convincing detail. By a US career intelligence officer with three decades' experience. Only towards the very end of *Mole* does the author discuss the manipulations of the Petrov case, does

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Mr Flood leave *terra firma* and enter the quagmire of the Oswald and Nosenko affairs. For no very obvious reason, he even brings in Heinrich Mueller, the Gestapo chief, who was allegedly recruited by the Russians in the last phase of the war.

The implications are mind-boggling and one turns therefore with some relief to the (relative) certainties of SIGINT. The French and the Austrians pioneered signal intelligence in the years prior to the First World War, but after 1916, "Room 40", British Naval Intelligence, became the most accomplished practitioner of the new craft. In general terms, the story has been told before, but since the documents were not accessible, the accounts were always based on personal recollections. The files of Room 40 have become available only in the last few years and then only in part. Patrick Beesly's book has to leave certain questions open (such as the sinking of the Lusitania) and it does not substantially revise the general picture of some key events such as the battle of Jutland and the Zimmermann Telegram. But it is the first authoritative history of British naval intelligence in the First World War and a worthy successor to Beesly's two other works in this field.

When Sir Alfred Ewing, the father of Room 40, referred in the most guarded way to some of its successes in a lecture in Edinburgh almost ten years after the end of the war, he was sternly rebuked by the authorities. James Bamford, an American "investigative writer", unimpeded by official secrets acts and similar nuisances, is in a position to give a detailed account of the operations of the National Security Agency, the main collector of SIGINT in the United States, without having to wait ten years. If British Naval Intelligence occupied a dozen rooms in the Admiralty, NSA extends over a thousand acres, employs tens of thousands of people, has the greatest concentration of computers in the world, a budget of at least four billion dollars (which is several times larger than the CIA budget) and provides two hundred tons of classified material in an average week. Bamford has unearthed a great deal of material about the structure of NSA, its directors and heads of departments

and, above all, much technical detail about the Carillon computer system, "loadstone", which is said to be even more powerful and more expensive, and the "platform" network which reportedly will become operative next year, tying together fifty-two separate computer systems throughout the world.

All these details about satellites and microwave technology, and the growth of SIGINT in general, are very impressive. Bamford quotes a former director of NSA to the effect that signal intelligence is not only more reliable than HUMINT but also somewhat less vulnerable to misinterpretation and deception than photo-intelligence. I still believe that photo-intelligence has the greater impact simply because, rightly or wrongly, most people trust their eyes more than their ears. But even if the general should be right, there is no reason to believe that SIGINT nowadays produces less intelligence of importance than in the two world wars. Partly, this is due to the sheer quantity of raw intelligence, far more than can be adequately analysed. More important, there have been defectors from NSA (there were none from Room 40 or Bletchley): America is the classic country of leaks; even the most secret and expensive new equipment and its functions usually become known after a while. (Without such leaks, Bamford's book, needless to say, could not have been written.) Which is to say that reasonably cautious people all over the globe will assume that their telephone conversations are overheard, their codes broken, and they will take precautionary measures. SIGINT still produces an enormous amount of material, which, intelligently analysed, must be of some use, especially to the military. For in modern society people have to communicate with each other and the constant use of invulnerable means of communications is expensive and time-consuming. A great deal of chit-chat is still collected, useful information about the location of all kind of institutions, installations and individuals. But once something truly important is about to happen, information from SIGINT sources will dry up or no longer be relied upon, and its analysts will wait in vain for another Zimmermann Telegram.

Performing fleas

David Hunt

G. M. ALEXANDER

The Prelude to the Truman Doctrine: British Policy in Greece 1944-1947 399pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £19.50. 0 19 822653 5

It seems impossible to compile an uninteresting book on the subject of Greek politics in the second half of the 1940s. Not all are so hilarious as George Kousoulas's faithful history of the Greek Communist Party, KKE; many quite rightly dwell on the tragic side, to which full justice is done in this carefully researched book by G. M. Alexander. But as Plato wrote in the *Symposium* and Churchill once quoted, "the qualities required for writing tragedy and comedy are the same."

A Greek tragedy, by definition, requires an element of inevitability. The course of events depicted here, though not inevitable, was certainly logical in a high degree, given the principles of the main opposing factions and their past history. It was natural for KKE to make the attempt, in December 1944, to seize power by force. They had carefully refrained from dissipating their strength in action against the German occupiers, since revolutionary dogma showed that the decisive battle would come after they withdrew. The fact that the British forces which then arrived were designed mainly for relief, so that the operational troops were outnumbered by the administrative, was an encouragement. The KKE very nearly won. The violent effect on public opinion of their failure may perhaps be called inevitable. The revelations of mass slaughter converted what had been a Republican majority into an equally large majority behind the Populist Party, whose programme was the restoration of King George II. It seemed the only safe alternative to a Stalinist dictatorship.

Mr Alexander's theme, as his subtitle professes, is British policy. He has based his narrative on a very thorough study of the documents now available in the Public Record Office. Greek Government archives have not yet been opened. The contribution he makes is valuable because the purposes and actions of British governments have often been misrepresented.

Their attitude towards the restoration of the monarchy in Greece is a good example. It is generally supposed that Churchill was an intransigent royalist. In fact he had decided in 1943 that King George II should not return after the liberation until a plebiscite had confirmed that was the popular desire; a Regent should replace him meanwhile. It was the devious Roosevelt who upset things by persuading the King to go back on his agreement. Roosevelt's motives are obscure; probably mere love of mischief-making. Also it would give him a splendid chance to strike a moral attitude next year by urging on Churchill the policy that he had wrecked. Eden had already observed, "U.S. policy is exaggeratedly moral, at least where non-American interests are concerned."

The first prime minister that the Regent appointed was the ferociously Republican Plastiras. Churchill, who always pronounced his name Plastiras, commented: "I hope he hasn't got a fever of rage." Plastiras turned out vigorous enough in pursuit of his anti-monarchist principles (and of favours for his friends, especially in the Army); he succeeded in postponing as long as possible both the plebiscite and the elections. In this he was steadily assisted by Rex Leeper, the British ambassador. The election, which came first against the Populists' wishes, resulted in a victory for them, correctly mirroring a still outraged public opinion; but the majority was nothing like so big as it would have been earlier. Abstentions by the left helped; but Alexander concludes that "Leeper's long and dogged effort to whittle down the royalists' popularity had met with considerable success."

The King when he returned had, as he had after his restoration in 1936, to be a constitutional monarch. He wanted ministers to come forward with advice, not to have to chivy them for it; he could persuade them to abandon their jealous quarrels; it was like trying to control a lot of jumping fleas," he complained. The politicians, all left-overs from the 1930s, were a poor lot, ranging from the violent to the ineffective, from Plastiras to Venizelos on the Republican side, to the Mavromichalis to Tsaldaris on the Populist. By far the best of a bad batch was the courageous and efficient George Papandreou.

By February 1946, the Communists were preparing for a new round; by autumn they controlled large areas of the north. In December, Field Marshal Montgomery dogmatically proclaimed the game was up. He was wrong, help was on the way. The United States, after the battle, sanctimoniously aloof for three years, persuaded itself that the support given to Communist insurgency by Yugoslavia and Albania proved that the Soviet Union intended to incorporate Greece in its empire. They could not conceive that these satellite could be acting even on direct orders. In truth, however, Stalin had stuck to his bargain to give the British a free hand in Greece. So when the battle was passed from the falling hands of London to Washington and the Truman Doctrine was proclaimed, vindication and completion of British policy came partly through error. Alexander's last sentence assesses "whatever success British policy enjoyed was the product not of design, but of fortune." Earlier he quotes a but justified description of that policy in an embassy dispatch of December 1946: "In choosing between the political odium we incur for disavowing the Greeks and the equally strong odium we incur in supporting them without attempting to dictate to them we have chosen the latter course."

practicability of the enterprise, also entertained considerable reservations concerning the League as a people, the qualities of leaders such as Yoshida Shigenobu and the "irresponsible faction" of the Japanese politics. At the same time, they tended to be insufficiently positive in their thinking (his criticism of Sir George Sansom in this regard will perhaps come as a surprise to some readers) and slow to acknowledge the pressing realities of potential power and influence - realities that would come, for example, that, contrary to London's hopes, the government of independent Japan would follow Washington's line and refuse to recognize the People's Republic of China.

Buckley is convincing when he submits that, thanks to these reservations, negative attitudes and approaches on the British side, "the physical and psychological barriers between Britain and Japan remained unbreached and Japan remained unoccupied and uncolonized". It is difficult to know how, however, when, on his final page and, on the basis of London's continuing desire to play a significant role in East Asia, he argues that the occupation of Japan was a "necessary consequence" in later years Edward Irving called her "the noble lady"; Coleridge records himself as having "delighted in the lady with the black eyes and the blue eye - both bright". In November, 1810, Coleridge could still aver that "she is indeed a very rare instance, of the union of a very superior intellect with winning kindness, heartiness and easy matronly confidence-winning manners". There was almost the end. By the following April he was taking counsel with himself to be cautious of forming any sort of intimacy or even familiarity with "a person of undoubted talents, more especially if a woman, and of apparent goodness (with whom) you feel uncomfortable and urged against your nature, to be therefore probably in vain; to be on your guard."

Throughout this frustrating experience, British officials shared little of the American optimism and enthusiasm regarding the task of creating a "new Japan." Tending to remain sceptical of the wisdom and

LITERARY HISTORY

Two letters from Coleridge to Mrs Montagu

Andor Gomme

The discovery of two curious letters written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Mrs Montagu in 1808 and 1810 came as an unexpected reward for an otherwise fruitless day spent going through miscellaneous Acton papers in the Cambridge University Library in the hope of finding some documents which would throw light on the building of the various Shropshire houses of that far-spread family. In 1808 Basil Montagu, natural son of the fourth Earl of Sandwich, married, as his third wife, Anna Skepper (née Beeson) after she had acted for a year as his housekeeper and hostess. He had long been a close acquaintance of the Wordsworths, who in 1794, soon after the death of Montagu's first wife, had taken in his very young son, also Basil, as a lodger. Coleridge met him during this period when the two poets were near neighbours in Somerset; but though they continued on easy terms and Montagu was one of the many who helped Coleridge, financially and otherwise, in more than one difficulty, they had met only occasionally before the first of these two letters was written. The letters - the only two known from Coleridge to Mrs Montagu - have not hitherto been recorded and are printed here through the courtesy of the University Librarian and with help in preparation most generously given by Dr John Beer. (One earlier and two roughly contemporary letters from Coleridge to Montagu himself are known, which are included in E. L. Griggs's edition of the *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Oxford 1956-71.)

Though Sir James Mackintosh had influenced Montagu to study Bacon and moderate his eager discipleship of William Godwin, he had not given up his enthusiasm for the ideals which had drawn him to Wordsworth, and which the new Mrs Montagu was supposed to share; and they took a weekend cottage at Merton in order, as Mary Wordsworth writes in her biography of Wordsworth, "to practise more completely the Wordsworthian way of life." As barrister and legal scholar, Montagu spent the week in his chambers in Lincoln's Inn, and it is hard to understand how Coleridge imagined that he could continue his legal practice while living at any distance from London. In 1808 Coleridge himself was at Allan Bank, Somerset, living with the Wordsworths, whose household at the time included Mary Wordsworth's sister, Sara Hutchinson, to whom Coleridge had by then been deeply attached for eight years; Greta Hall, which Coleridge's family shared with his brother-in-law, Robert Southey, was about ten miles away. Coleridge persisted in trying to establish closer contact with the Montagus, as early as 1809 came up with a plan for them to spend the long vacations in the Lake District and leave some of the children behind. Between them the Montagus had at this point five children, including Mrs Montagu's daughter Ann, referred to in the first letter below; Coleridge's elder son, Hartley, was then twelve.

The intriguing Mrs Montagu was undoubtedly part of the attraction of such a scheme. She was a lady who liked always to cut something of a dash in the world, and she was, in the words of *DNB*, "able and pleased to fascinate men." In her youth she had once met and engaged Burns and had received an ironically fulsome letter from him in consequence; in later years Edward Irving called her "the noble lady"; Coleridge records himself as having "delighted in the lady with the black eyes and the blue eye - both bright". In November, 1810, Coleridge could still aver that "she is indeed a very rare instance, of the union of a very superior intellect with winning kindness, heartiness and easy matronly confidence-winning manners". There was almost the end. By the following April he was taking counsel with himself to be cautious of forming any sort of intimacy or even familiarity with "a person of undoubted talents, more especially if a woman, and of apparent goodness (with whom) you feel uncomfortable and urged against your nature, to be therefore probably in vain; to be on your guard."

Mrs Skepper, now

Montagu is then instanced as one with whom he should maintain only the most formal and distant acquaintance. The Wordsworths had never warmed towards her, and the esteem which Coleridge so confidently passes on in 1808 is almost entirely the product of his fancy. Though, even after his breach with Wordsworth, the latter refused to criticize Mrs Montagu openly (saying to Crab Robinson, "she is the wife of my friend"), there is little reason to doubt that Wordsworth shared the severe opinion of his sister - not a person renowned for harshness - who wrote to her brother in April, 1812, "As to Mrs M the more I think of her the more I despise her, and I hope you will not be shy of telling her your mind respecting her conduct between Coleridge and you." By April, 1814, Coleridge thought her a fiend.

What had come in between were *The Friend*, the rapid deterioration of Coleridge's health with his increasingly heavy dependence on opium and finally the lamentable quarrel with Wordsworth, in which Basil Montagu played so unfortunate a part and his wife, with her evident delight in making a stir, one which it is all too easy to imagine. The two letters to Mrs Montagu were written just before and just after the period of *The Friend*, the periodical of which Coleridge had such high hopes: prospectuses were already in preparation in 1808, issued in February, 1809, and Coleridge's friends were impressed to help in publishing it: according to a letter of December 28, 1808 (to Daniel Stuart who was overseeing the printing), Montagu was to receive 100 prospectuses. By dint of enormous effort *The Friend* ran for twenty-eight numbers between June, 1809, and March, 1810; but it did not win the new admirers that Coleridge needed and, at only thirty-six, he was living on borrowed energy, "his whole time and thoughts," as Dorothy Wordsworth wrote of him in April, "employed in deceiving himself and seeking to deceive others; he was sure that it was only because he was living with them that he wasn't 'as much the slave of stimulants as ever'." It was a struggle that, even with the devoted attendance of Sara Hutchinson, they could not win. Sara's departure from Allan Bank in 1810 marked the point of Coleridge's final inability to continue *The Friend*. She had laboured uncomplainingly as his amanuensis, working from his dictation and transcribing both his and Wordsworth's manuscripts. The devotion with which Coleridge rewarded her was intermittent, and Dorothy, "speaking very unwillingly," thought it at this time wholly self-interest that "his love for her is no more than a fanciful dream." He likes to devote to him, but when she stood in the way of other gratifications it was all over.

Sara left in March, worn out with physical labour and the effort to keep them in dependence on opium and alcohol in peace. Coleridge stayed on at Allan Bank for a few weeks and then - a departure unregretted by the Wordsworths whose forbearance had been long and sorely tried - moved, with his wife's concurrence if not at her behest, back to Greta Hall. He was throughout the summer apparently contented and on good terms with everyone; but the collapse of yet another brave scheme had left him creatively directionless, and he wrote almost nothing - not even letters, if we may judge by the complete absence of them in the surviving collection. Sara Coleridge was no match for her husband's addictions, and it seems certain that the good spirits of the time were bought at the cost of a steeply increased dependence on opium to the point where, according to Southey, he was taking a pint of laudanum a day - more than twice de Quincey's dose at the height of his addiction. There was talk, but no more, of his consulting a doctor in Edinburgh.

It was into this state of affairs that the "Montagus" marched with characteristic eagerness, bustle, and self-confidence. They had come to stay during September at Allan Bank, and, following a part of Coleridge's plan, to leave Montagu's second son (his first by his second wife) at school with

Coleridge's two sons in Ambleside. Having seen probably nothing of Coleridge since 1808, the Montagus were shocked by his condition but convinced that by example and persuasion they could achieve in a few weeks what had defeated the patient care of Sara Hutchinson and the Wordsworths over so many years. They determined to take Coleridge back to London to be treated by a surgeon whom they admired and to occupy a room in their house which Mrs Montagu had set apart to be "hallowed" by his presence: her motives at least were touched by an



been accustomed to receive what he took to be the deepest respect. To whatever extent the pain was self-engendered, there is no doubt that Coleridge was stunned and lastingly hurt by Montagu's revelation: his notebook entry of October 28 is a sequence of fragmented bitterness. The special interest of the second of these letters to Mrs Montagu comes from its having been written to the epicentre of his distress evidently on the day after the explosion. (The letter must follow his departure from Frith Street and antedate that of November 1810.)

John Monkhouse was at this time trying to establish himself as a farmer in collaboration with Tom Hutchinson, brother of Sara and of Mary Wordsworth, and his own cousin and future brother-in-law. He and his sister were staying with his mother-in-law at the address by Russell Square in which Coleridge directs Mrs Montagu. Just what Mary was, or was thought to be, suffering from is hard to tell from the mishmash in Coleridge's letter: the treatment he describes suggests an ailment or the "liver complaint" that he thought congenital to the

element of self-glorification - it would be fine to be the patroness of the great man and to care for and foster him where others had failed. Exactly what followed remains to some extent speculation; but the main outlines are clear, and all the evidence has been assembled and described with exemplary thoroughness and fairness by Mrs Moorman. Wordsworth, knowing well the characteristic and "utterly discordant" habits of life of the two men, decided to tell Montagu something of Coleridge's ways - including almost certainly his heavy drinking of spirits - in the hope of dissuading them from a plan that he foresaw would bring disaster to Coleridge and serious upset to his hosts. Montagu apparently gave up the idea of having him to live at his house, but insisted that Coleridge accompany them to London. They arrived at Frith Street, Soho - at a house which the Montagus may only have been using as temporary lodgings - on October 28, and on that evening Montagu took it upon himself to repeat to Coleridge what Wordsworth had said. The motives for this astonishing indiscretion are still not clear: possibly Montagu needed some reason for not, after all, inviting Coleridge to live with them; but Mrs Moorman plausibly suggests that he was in large measure prompted by a literal-minded adherence to the Godwinian notion that "we were in a state of universal role of civilized life, that conversation is not to be repeated, particularly to the persons who may happen to be the subject of it, could be safely dispensed with." Nor is it now possible to know how accurately Montagu repeated Wordsworth's words; the several versions which Coleridge himself retailed for some eighteen months were unquestionably exaggerated and distorted (and were strongly repudiated by Wordsworth); his belief that he was undervalued and despised reflects a lasting self-dissatisfaction which was easier to bear if projected on to the world's unfair treatment, particularly if that world had at its centre one from whom he had long

announces arrangements for Mrs Montagu to call on Monkhouse's sister. Coleridge was forced to write because he had left Frith Street precipitately after Montagu made his disclosures: he went to Hudson's Hotel nearby in King Street, Covent Garden, and stayed there till he was rescued a few days later by his friends the Morgans, who took him to their house in Hammersmith. Strangely enough, however, the letter only mentions his distress briefly and in passing - "the extreme agitation of mind, which I have this day undergone" - and concerns itself almost entirely, and at length which in other circumstances would seem effective, with an altogether new topic between them: the health of Mary Monkhouse, the much-loved cousin of Mary Wordsworth and Sara Hutchinson. Though some of Coleridge's claims about Wordsworth's feelings are baseless, it is probably true that Mary was, as he put it in almost identical terms to her brother, "the only woman whom I ever heard Wordsworth deliver entire praise, & without any drawback; his own wife excepted; of whose virtues he considers your Sister, as a Duplicate". Earlier in October she had come to London with her mother and sister, which had been relieved by the application of "a large blister". Anisley is probably to be identified with Henry Anisley, a native of Kendal who, according to the *DNB*, "attained to no great fame or practice as a physician".

John Monkhouse was at this time trying to establish himself as a farmer in collaboration with Tom Hutchinson, brother of Sara and of Mary Wordsworth, and his own cousin and future brother-in-law. He and his sister were staying with his mother-in-law at the address by Russell Square in which Coleridge directs Mrs Montagu. Just what Mary was, or was thought to be, suffering from is hard to tell from the mishmash in Coleridge's letter: the treatment he describes suggests an ailment or the "liver complaint" that he thought congenital to the

Monkhouses. But two months later, when Dorothy reported her "in a very precarious state", she was being treated as a consumptive - by Coleridge, whose urgent help it seems to be the business of Coleridge's letter to solicit.

Anthony Carlisle (1768-1840) was a surgeon of some repute, a fashionable physician, a subscriber to *The Friend* and a friend of the Montagus, who seem to have successfully coerced Coleridge into consulting him. (In 1814 Coleridge wrote of his having been "duped... to travel 300 miles to put myself under his care", and even in 1810 it is possible that his recommendation of Carlisle may have been a subconscious attempt to persuade himself that he was doing the right thing in his own case.) On November 13, 1810, Mary Lamb wrote to Dorothy Wordsworth that Coleridge had not yet begun his course under Carlisle, and indeed it seems certain that he never did so. By April, 1811, at any rate, he was writing contemptuously of him; and it is now apparent that their differences began with the occasion of Carlisle's accusation of "impudence and presumption". Very likely Coleridge had been airing his own medical knowledge in front of the vain and crotchety Carlisle: to Daniel Stuart in 1814 he accused Carlisle of "eagerly seizing the opportunity for avenging himself for an offence, of which I was wholly unconscious, that of having 3 or 4 years before, reduced him, neither wittingly or willingly, to play the second fiddle at a Wine Party" - evidently the occasion referred to in the present letter. It must have been this, rather than, as Griggs suggests, Carlisle's unprofessional disclosures, which moved Coleridge to take a back seat in the arrangements for the treatment of Mary Monkhouse. Dorothy Wordsworth was right that the two men had quarrelled, and doubtless this helped to put Coleridge into a bad mood before Montagu's disclosures. Whatever the truth about Carlisle's skill, his treatment of Mary Monkhouse seems to have worked, and Mary, despite frequent alarms about her health, lived on to marry Tom Hutchinson, and thereafter into old age.

The chief psychological interest of the earlier letter, written when Coleridge was still in his first enthusiasm for Mrs Montagu's charms, lies in its providing further and more detailed evidence of his obsessive fear of letters, references to which occur in his own correspondence as early as 1805, and which exacerbated his difficult relations with his wife and friends. On December 14, 1808, he begins a letter to Francis Jeffrey: "The only thing in which I have been able to detect any degree of hypochondriacism in my feelings, is the reading and answering of letters, and this instance I have been at times so woefully under its domination, as to have left every letter received lie unopened for weeks together, all the while thoroughly ashamed of the weakness and yet without power to get rid of it. This however has not been the case of late; and I wake never yet so careless, as knowingly to suffer a letter relating to money to remain unanswered by the next post in my power." He therefore concludes that a letter from Jeffrey has miscarried. Yet three days later he deplores the same fault concerning a letter which manifestly has not. His self-diagnosis of hypochondriacism seems to do little more than give a name to the symptom: such a neurosis evidently has deeper roots, and the compulsive length of his explanation suggests a buried awareness of how far he had fallen below the achievements which his remarkable talents ought to have led to, an awareness which he was soon to convert into an all-too-ready blame of those who he persuaded himself had failed or betrayed him. It is, sadly, characteristic of that, during the negotiations in 1812 which in some measure brought Coleridge and Wordsworth together again, he not only contemptuously dismissed Montagu as "a creature" but insisted that, unlike Wordsworth, he, Coleridge, had "never respected or liked" Montagu - "for if I had ever in a common degree done so, I should have

Playing second fiddle

Christopher Thorne

ROGER BUCKLEY

Occupation Diplomacy: Britain, the United States and Japan 1945-1952 294pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50. 0 521 23567 7

In the days when publishers hunted along university corridors in search of authors with whom to swell their lists, a good many doctoral theses were given an inflated value by being rushed into print. Now, in sterner times, we must be grateful that means can still be found of giving wider circulation to monographs of genuine worth by young scholars, such as this one by Roger Buckley.

Refreshingly, he makes clear at the outset the limits of his canvas. His study makes use of only some of the unpublished material in the United States, and none of that in Australia, that would be required for a broader treatment of the policies of the occupying powers towards Japan immediately following the Second World War. Instead, the focus is upon the Foreign Office and the policies of Britain alone. And if such a description immediately begs questions concerning the rôle of other Whitehall institutions, Buckley is able to show that, as had been the case over Far Eastern policies in the early 1930s, it was indeed in the Foreign Office, for the most part, that London's approaches to Japanese issues were shaped. ("A British Government which cared passionately about the future of a divided Germany," he writes, "had little systematic interest in Japanese affairs.") The disadvantage facing the author in this respect has been that unpublished official papers were available to him only up to 1949, so that the final years covered by his study - and in particular, the new

situation brought about by the advent of the Korean War - will need further investigation. Even so, what he has given us here will remain of value to all those coming after him.

Britain's position in the Far East as a whole has, of course, become fragile long before the Second World War. (Vansittart privately acknowledged in the early 1930s that she was "done for" ultimately in that part of the world unless American support was forthcoming.) By 1945, not only had the Japanese rudely exposed this state of affairs, but the country's overall decline was such that it was admitted within the Foreign Office that, in order to ensure the continuance of essential economic and financial assistance from across the Atlantic, "we may well find ourselves forced to follow the United States in a line of policy with which we do not fundamentally agree". Whitehall and its political masters had to learn a new subservience, whatever the frustrations involved, as Robert Hathaway has spelled out in his study of the years 1944-47, *Ambiguous Partnership*.

Nowhere was Britain's junior status likely to become more apparent than over the treatment of a defeated Japan. American forces had played by far the largest part in securing victory and retained an overwhelming predominance in the region; Washington had for some time been preparing detailed plans for remoulding the ideological and political bases of Japanese society, and would brook no interference from European states whose entire approach to international affairs was held to have become deeply and dangerously flawed. True, Britain was not alone in finding herself on the periphery, but almost sovereign powers began to be circumscribed by Washington, so too did the scope for British initiative and influence diminish further still.

Some of the British soldiers and diplomats involved may have been

rather too ready to accept at their face value MacArthur's expressions of esteem for the Empire. (During the war, whilst uttering such sentiments to the likes of Mountbatten, he had been speaking in a very different sense to the Dutch, for example.) Be that as it may, Britain was not allowed to play any part in the shaping of Japan's new constitution. Over the issue of whether to institute proceedings against certain Japanese for major war crimes, London did succeed, it is true, in getting the initial American list greatly reduced; but the subsequent proceedings of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East were regarded in the Foreign Office as "in some ways a sorry affair". The reopening of the Japanese market to international traders in 1947 (thereby, it was hoped, preventing the development of an American monopoly) represented in part a British success; far greater, however, was the defeat in 1948-49, when the United States not only began to bolster Japan's economy but gave the yen a fixed, low value that would favour a commercial drive on her part, for example, Southeast Asia. (Buckley points up the irony involved, in that in 1945 British ideas about Japan's post-war economy had been more generous than those of Washington or MacArthur's staff. He also provides interesting material on the vain attempts of Lancashire textile interests, through Harold Wilson at the Board of Trade, to prevent the set-backs of 1948-49.) As for the shaping of the 1951 Peace Treaty, London often found itself lacking essential information as John Foster Dulles drove ahead to produce, in the author's words, "an undisguised American victory".

Throughout this frustrating experience, British officials shared little of the American optimism and enthusiasm regarding the task of creating a "new Japan." Tending to remain sceptical of the wisdom and

Some of the British soldiers and diplomats involved may have been

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quarrelled with him long before we arrived in London". He was writing to Lamb, the friend before whom he was least self-defensive: but it is easy to show that this was simply not true.

The ease with which obsessive enthusiasm turns to scorn or resentment is of course a commonplace. And, as Coleridge's mind dwelt on itself in a frustration possibly encouraged by the Morgans' remarkable patience and inability to take offence at any wayward behaviour, it is easy to understand how the enchanting Montagu became a villain, and how important it was for Coleridge to maintain a belief in his own uprightness. This perhaps explains some of the tension evident in the second of these two letters – noteworthy in the first place as concerning itself centrally with care for someone else: also in that this someone else is an intimate connection of the Wordsworths (one whom the Montagus hadn't met and whom the Wordsworths probably thought they shouldn't meet); and most especially that, at a time when Coleridge was mortified and bitterly hurt by what he believed Wordsworth to have said of him, he recommended Mary Monkhouse above all as someone that the Montagus should care for because this would endear them and Carlisle to the Wordsworths. Despite the shock of what he had, or believed himself to have, heard of Wordsworth's opinions of himself, the Wordsworths were still "one of the most amiable families on earth", and there is no hint of qualification in Wordsworth's being identified as "one of Basil's dearest friends". (Likewise, Coleridge's memory of having been snubbed by Carlisle is swallowed up in his earnest recommendation of Carlisle's skills.) It is understandable that in writing two or three days later to John Monkhouse Coleridge should continue to speak enthusiastically of Wordsworth's esteem for his sister Mary, altogether remarkable that a letter to one of the Montagus should at this time maintain Coleridge's devotion to those whom (however mistakenly) he now thought guilty of the basest treachery.

It would be pleasant to ascribe this seeming disregard of his own hurt solely to that disarming and self-revealing openness and generosity of spirit which Coleridge undoubtedly possessed and which allows one to get more touchingly close to him than perhaps to any other writer of comparable stature. But Coleridge, like most letter-writers, was in the habit of adapting the tone and often the contents of his letters to their recipients; and though it is perhaps wrong to suggest deliberate bad faith on this occasion, one cannot escape the very conscious pose of the good Christian, the expression of which takes the form of a familiar kind of rhetorical self-battering of which Coleridge, except in rare moments of self-forgetfulness, was always in need. Mrs Montagu may not have been perceptive (or generous) enough to read any but the surface message; but the letter seems to be as much a cry for help for Coleridge as for help for Mary Monkhouse.

THE LETTERS

Note: The letters have been transcribed as closely to the originals as printing will permit, with an attempt to reproduce Coleridge's idiosyncratic punctuation, which includes frequent dashes in place of full stops, or stops which stretch into dashes (of varying lengths) and a stroke (/) which is evidently something between a full stop and comma. Hopkins also used the stroke in his notebooks, which led Humphry House to wonder whether he might have seen Coleridge's, perhaps via E. H. Coleridge, with whom he was at school. Angle brackets indicate deletions in the manuscript.

1808

[Address] Mrs Montagu<e>/Basil Montagu's, Esqre/Merton/Surry Single Sheet
[Stamped on address panel KENDAL; on reverse 10 o'Clock/DE.17/1808 F.N.D.]

My dear Mrs Montague:

It would be well for me, – o god! what a deal of unhappiness it would have saved me, and how much occasion of just, & yet not just, offence – if the few persons, whom I indeed love and regard and have so declared myself, lived within ten miles of me. Then, not only my Heart dares avow it with confidence, but experience has proved, that no one would have had cause to blame me. The grievous fault, the Queen Bee in the Hive of my Failures, which the misery which caused it and the misery of which it has been the cause, have both joined in rendering strong and inveterate, has been my hypochondriacal Horror of Letters – without distinction, I was going to say, of Friend or Foe but this is not true – for I open a stranger's Letters with indifference, and an enemy's with curiosity – but letters from those, whom I love, lie with their seals reproaching me day after day/for I have too much conscience to keep them out of sight or remembrance – and then I have the hateful necessity of making protestations of respect, love & esteem to those, <of> whom I ought no more to have been permitted to doubt of it than they indeed would or could if they saw in and thro' my whole Heart. I have suffered more in mind from my silence to you and Montagu<e> than you would have inflicted on me if I had absolutely injured you / and those in the House did not cease to admonish me, and ask how I could expect people who were with me and knew and understood – However, let me do myself the Justice to say that I did answer your questions – and that at first I was not so much in fault / and that I thought and thought about it. I thought myself into languor & nervous agitation – Whether you will forgive me or no, I will tell you my whole mind – First, I assure you on my Honor, that W. W. and all this Family are most sincerely & deeply attached to Basil – and I know, that there are few women indeed whom he esteems equally with yourself, and not one

whom he at once so much esteems and admires. Secondly, if I had the power of conveying to you half the pleasures, half the advantages, and all the feelings that make up a want, which your living within a short walk of us would give me, and all this family, you would be vexed at yourself if ever you thought otherwise. 3. The Children would receive every advantage of which they may be recipient – more than in any other situation whatsoever. I am a perpetual Thanksgiver with respect to my own. (O! you would have been affected if you had seen the pale face, the sudden Tear drop, and the sudden Hiding of his Face on a Chair followed by sobbing, when I mentioned the probability of you and Anne living near us. "Are you not glad then, Hartley?" – No, said he – no! I am not glad – I do not know what I am – but I shall break my Heart (this in a quickened & passionate Tone) if after all it is not so. – You may smile; but I assure you, that what we all thought a Joke, gave me then and has since some uneasiness – His attachment is so very deep.) 4. Your expenses of ordinary Life would, I am convinced, be about the same – certainly, I should think, not less than at Merton – & probably, not greater. – What then is the Objection? In my mind one, only one of importance (for the expense of a Journey to & from London once or even twice a year would only stimulate Basil to greater Industry) – it is, that I deem it impossible, that Basil can be happy without your society now he has been accustomed to it – and that your residence here would unsettle his mind & insinuate a disgust to his Profession; in which he is so useful to himself and to society; & daily more eminent. I could write a Sheet on this – but do you state it fairly to your own mind – If you knew the struggles of my mind in first admitting the Objection in all its strength, & next in stating it to you, it is not three times as great an appearance of neglect & coldness as mine of late, that would prove from loving me – If the argument appear of no weight, for myself I rejoice, yes, heart & soul, and you take it on yourselves. – Forgive me – and when I am no longer afraid, you will find me a better Correspondent monthly –

What Basil can do for me in the way of recommending my "Friend", he will – all must depend on the Zeal of my Friends – on which alas I have more often thrown water than oil. God bless him & you <e> the [and two more undecipherable words – all crossed out in different ink] & poor me.

S. T. Coleridge
Grasmere, Kendal

1810

[Address] Mrs Montagu/55 Frith Street [Undated, but written between October 29 and 31, 1810]

Dear Madam

I left my company soon after the Cloth was removed, with the intention of proceeding with dear Charles Lamb to your house. (A something within almost commands me to utter the

feeling, which the act of writing his name set afloat in my heart, that I have been his intimate seventeen long years, have received numberless kindnesses & refreshments of love from him – that once he was provoked by calumny to write unkindly to me – but never once spoke or thought unkindly of me to others. May God bless him! – But having occasion to stop at my Hotel, I found myself so exhausted & so altogether unwell, from the extreme agitation of mind, which I have this day undergone, that I did not dare trust myself into any scene or subject of conversation that might draw largely on my sensibility without an interval of Solitude, solitary self-submission, and Sleep.

But this latter I am not likely to obtain, unless I first perform a duty – the particulars of which I will explain to you as briefly as I can. – There are in town at present two Cousins of Mrs Wordsworth's, Mr John Monkhouse, and his Sister, Mary Monkhouse. The latter is the young Woman, whom, I know, Mr Wordsworth of all others on earth most esteems – & who possesses – His Wife & Sister excepted – the largest portion of his Love & Anxiety. – She has been in town, at Mrs Addison's, No. 38, Bernard Street, Russell Square, for some months on account of her Health, and has been under a Doctor Ainsley – Neither her Brother, or herself, are satisfied with his <tr> mode of treating of her – and tho' very recent experience has made me sore as to what may not bring on a charge of "impudence & presumption" on me when <the> my conversation with Mr Carlisle at your house could do it; yet I may venture to say, that her mode of treatment does appear even to my understanding highly injudicious. It is enough however, that Mr Monkhouse himself has these fears – Indigestion, Flushings after meals, and all that gives alarm of Consumption, are all that I know of her case, or could learn from her Brother – But yet I have my suspicions, that not any pulmonary affection, but atony of the Bowels, and possibly an accumulation of undigested matter, is the main <matter> Evil – <and> for that a languid Liver is the family complaint, I am quite certain. – Now Dr Ainsley has been doing with Steel medicines, Wine, & c & c – and she gets worse & worse –

Now as Mr Carlisle can have no prejudices against her, and as I have impressed both her & her Brother with a very high idea of Mr Carlisle's skill or rather his good sense & Penetration in <this matter> all cases of this kind, Mr Monkhouse obtained a promise from me at a time when I felt no difficulty in making it & foresaw no difficulty in its performance, that I would state the circumstances to Mr Carlisle, and prevail on him to call on the young Lady. I transcribed my own feelings into the hearts of others – & I well knew, that any attention or kindness to Mary Monkhouse would endear Mr Carlisle's name to one of the most amiable families on Earth – and that William & Mary Wordsworth would almost adore him for any services he might render her – even tho' it should

only be the letting her & her Brother know, what her case really is!

Now, my dear Madam! I have to request of you & of Basil – first, is, that you would use all your call on her – if possible, tomorrow – No. 38 Bernard St, Russell Square – second is, that you would give me some hint with regard to her – Her fortune is very narrow – indeed, and she is struggling on in Life, but she is not so, but that she is both able & eager to make every acknowledgment made – But yet – I am so embarrassed, & heart-awkwardized whenever I have talk of money matters with people whom I look up to – it might so happen, that it might be useful for <the> young amiable young Woman that Mr C. should see her often – and between ourselves, I know that their circumstances would scarcely permit of her so long a visit, daily, – I pray you, feel & speak for me more delicately, than delicacy itself enables me to do. At all events, I would have Mr C. entreated to call on her, as on a very dear friend of one of Basil's dearest friends – and I shall advise Mr Monkhouse, who is all in a tremor, to be so – st he should err upon propriety in omission, or upon delicacy in offering, to offer Mr C. a usual fee – (tho' what that is, I do not know) and then I shall receive your hint from you as to the after conduct. But pray, pray, do prevail on Mr Carlisle to call on her tomorrow – at that be impossible, next day – & let me know it. Indeed, I wish you had Mary Monkhouse herself – she is so exemplary, that this Letter will altogether superfluous – as was my repeated Assurance, that there is one thing in the World by which she would so highly gratify William Wordsworth. It would pass for a impolitic addition with the world in Letter to a Woman, if I say, that Mary Monkhouse is the only person, whom I ever heard Wordsworth deliver praise total, & without drawback. – I should be highly gratified with a line or two in answer. I will myself God permitting, call on you as soon as I am up & drest tomorrow morning – S.T.C.

[On the verso of the outer cover: But good as to send by the Beattie volume of South, if you have any other.]

¹ In a letter to Southey (July 28, 1798) Lamb quotes from a satirical letter he had written to Coleridge on the latter's departure for Germany: "He does seem on that occasion to have been provoked by calumny, but to have 'unkind' letter from Lamb to have very likely Coleridge destroyed it."

² Robert South's Sermons Preached Upon Several Occasions (published 1737) was favourite reading of Coleridge, especially when he was in need of comfort. Quotations from South in the notebooks for early November suggest that Mrs Montagu sent the volume along.

reader can say) . . . and "How I loved Livingstone" by Mr Stanley. "At those moments the text comes alive and the Old Song" declares itself. "Coleridge, especially when he was in need of comfort. Quotations from South in the notebooks for early November suggest that Mrs Montagu sent the volume along."

The other work included in the volume, "Edifying Letters of the Rutherford Family" was known already as being by Stevenson. It is incomplete but tantalizing for its autobiographical references, particularly to the quarrel which the young (and financially dependent) Stevenson had with his parents over religion.

The mountaineer and writer James Brown has selected Poems of the Scottish Hills: An Anthology (Edinburgh: University Press, 1979) paperback £5.90, 0 08 028476 0, a paperback of nearly 250 pages ranging widely in quality of subject-matter. Poets (130) of the represented not surprisingly include R. L. Stevenson, Norman MacCaig (who wrote the foreword) and Robert Garioch; more so, Keats, Chesterton and Geoffrey Faber.

POETRY

House Call

No, not a Person from Porlock.
I'm here on leisure, long stretches of it.
Porlock sounds an amusing place, though –
Who knows, I might become its Parson one day.
Frivolity? Far from it, sir. Theology.

Death's no great bugbear, I can see:
It comes to all. But ah, the sequel –
Some variation there. Which is the point,
Or part of it.
O Lord, grant none of us his own damnation –
That's what the poet should have asked.
He couldn't see the graveyard for the angels.

You ought to straighten out your thoughts:
They help a lot, helps Thought at least.
My senses are the present, past and future,
Never the conditional. I learn from my mistakes.

A whole eternity to write a magnum opus in?
Oh no, good sir, not with your fingers broken.
Nor are there likely readers for it,
Not with their eyes plucked out.

Why, even this exchange would be a monologue
Did not noblesse oblige me to construe you.
Misconstrue? Truth the first casualty?
But that was long ago. Why should you worry?
Truth's not the first to suffer here . . .

One can't rely on self-punishment –
There's never enough muscle in it.

True, memory begins to go at your age.
That's to say, the pleasant memories go,
Leaving the other kind more elbow-room,
And (pending eternity) more time too.

Rehearse your sins? No need,
We both are perfect in them. As for mitigation –
That famed esprit de l'escalier is wasted
When the escalator's sinking fast.

On this patch of earth of yours,
A sailor, hero of some war or other –
Those tiny islands, Falklands? – was walking home
From barracks. He was mugged, was hit so hard
His mind went blank. Couldn't even remember
That heroic action. There's a pretty crime!
You're banal.

Also that student, in what you call so quaintly
"Foreign parts", him and his girl, true lovers,
Whose people didn't hold with interracial marriage.
(Interracial! Wait till you mate with monsters!)
They took a room in a small hotel – consummated est –
And sleeping pills. He awoke next morning.
She slept, soundly. There's an ingenious gal!
You're lack genius.

– Purely an aesthetic judgement,
And quite beside the point.

Hell, you mean? Well, hell is war.
(Pardon me, the road is paved with puns.)
Or in the words of that most copious penman:
Indescribable.

Another reason why you won't bring off
That maximum opus, your last hope,
For armchair travellers: Which Way I Fly.

Freedom of expression? Heavens,
You've already had let forgotten?
These human rights are other humans' wrongs . . .
You must admit, there needs to be some difference
Of kingdom come from kingdom gone.

With which I say farewell. Until the next time,
Friend, or – as it might be – timelessness.

D. J. Enright

Moving In

Well that is where the pictures hung:
Three squares; dust-rimmed and blank as a slammed door.

Were they masked, before, by Still Lives,
Or scenes of Venice; or serial studies

Of an uncle coming up to bowl
In sepi white flannels; his moustache

Placing at the batsman (off camera left?)
I forward their letters; but I do not ask.

At last it is time to mark out my territory.
I take hammer and nails; and over the squares.

I superimpose my stuffed carp. Its starboard eye
Rides high, majestically, over my new room.

Connie Bensley

Enthusiastic engagements

Grevel Lindop

GEOFFREY GRIGSON

Blessings, Kicks and Curses: A Critical Collection

279pp.

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Collected Poems 1963-1980

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The Private Art: A Poetry Notebook

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Alison and Busby. £9.95 each

How many contemporary English poet-critics are there of whom one could read 750 pages, verse and prose, without being bored or badly disappointed? Not many. Robert Graves, C. H. Sisson, and now, it is clear, Geoffrey Grigson, whose three new books, appearing together, ask to be taken seriously, and to be read at length – a test which they pass splendidly.

If I say this with a feeling of relief, it is because Grigson's criticism, in reviews and letters to the press, has often seemed angry and impatient, while his poems have sometimes looked as if they were thinning out to a kind of diluted imagism. Reading him in bulk corrects these impressions. It becomes clear that the criticism, however polemical, is powered by enthusiasm and a delight in discovery, and that there are poems of great and poignant honesty, which go far beyond the mere noting of moods or impressions.

Blessings, Kicks and Curses (an almost self-parodying title) collects Grigson's essays and reviews from 1974 to 1981, adding a few earlier pieces. Most of the articles are about poetry, and the poets dealt with range from Campion to Ted Hughes. The book begins discouragingly, with a rather laboured satire on English intellectual life in the 1950s which might better have been left in the magazine where it had slept contentedly since 1957. Matters improve at once, however, when Grigson comes to the discussion of individual poets. He censures (in an essay on Allen Tate which is a finely judged exercise in faint praise) a critic, which is "too plain, too removed, with no main root in a layer of sensation", and it is in the criticism of enthusiasm and engagement that he excels. Perhaps for this reason he is at his best when he examines "minor" or "neglected" poets: there are good pieces on Campion and Barnes, on Flecker and Crabbe, as well as excellent essays on Chatterton and Andrew Young, and a short introduction to Wyndham Lewis. Of Chatterton, Grigson can value the "power to write strong lines of suggestive exoticism" those tropes pastoral with their rich, incongruous colour-splashes of mawson and scarlet jasmine – and still conclude that "in *extenso* he remains about the most tedious poet in the English canon". This kind of plain-spoken discrimination, a refusal to melt his judgments down to a safe average, makes the essays continually exciting.

No one is going to agree with everything in the book. Grigson is pleasantly sceptical about Rosenberg – "aesthetic turbulence in an ordinary mind" – and has qualified respect for Pound and Ford Madox Ford: "both these men of remarkable sight knew about the workings of a true literature they couldn't themselves produce". Both helped others to produce it. On the other hand, his reverence for Wilfred Owen is surprising, and he can see no good in the poems of Keith Douglas. But then, isn't the best criticism that which provokes us to argue as we read, taking its chances and, when wrong, being so for interesting reasons? And when it comes to detailed insights (which, after all, are the lifeblood of criticism) Grigson is so often right.

Grigson was also right (in a way that has been of some historical importance) about Auden, publishing him in his magazine *New Verse* from 1933 and becoming thereafter a consistently intelligent and persuasive advocate for Auden's work. A fine essay here, "A Meaning of Auden", recalls his early discovery of Auden's

poetry and communicates in a memorable vignette the delight of receiving the poems Auden submitted to *New Verse*:

They came on half sheets of notepaper, on long sheets of lined foolscap, in that writing an airborne daddy-longlegs might have managed with one dangling leg, sometimes in pencil, sometimes smudged and still less easy to decipher. They had to be typed before they went to the printer, and in the act of typing each poem established itself. It was rather like old-fashioned developing in the dark-room, but more certain, more exciting.

At the far end of the enormous room, an orchestra is playing to the rich – there at last on the white page, to be clearer still on the galley, the first entire sight of a new poem joining our literature.

It would be good to have more such essays on Grigson's masters and contemporaries, but he is tantalizingly reticent about Eliot and Yeats, and even the discussion of Auden is short and mainly concerned with very early work. One reason for this may be that *Blessings, Kicks and Curses* is mostly made up of reviews and other occasional pieces. Auden's death and the appearance of Edward Mendelson's *The English Auden* prompted articles, but in the case of other great moderns the stimulus may have been lacking. More important, probably, is Grigson's fundamental distrust of criticism itself. The best critic, he implies, is the one who quotes (not argues or analyses) best; he dislikes book-length criticism, avoids reading books about poets who are his contemporaries and in particular "cannot bear" books about Auden; he is also annoyed by the fact that books about poetry always seem in greater demand than books of good poems. Grigson is honourably reluctant to add to the deafening critical barrage.

The most useful thing criticism can do, he suggests, is to celebrate the good which has been overlooked, and he brings to light a number of neglected poets and poems: Flecker; Meselfeld's "Daffodil Fields" for example; and Tennyson's brother Charles, who made poems of the Steam Threshing Machine, and the Hydraulic Ram, and "little Phoebe killed by a fall of the cliff when she was out collecting shells –

She took the homeward path that led Beneath our dark-blue ridge, when sad to tell.

On her fair head the gloomy lies fell". Grigson's brisk prose is often brightened by surprising, appropriate metaphors and similes, as when he recalls reading Campion's poems "much as one will play over and over again a short lyric, a graphic recitative, or judges the recent scrutiny of Edward Thomas's prose "too much metal-detecting over the prose word-heaps". A poet's prose, to risk a phrase too often sentimentally applied.

Collected Poems 1963-1980 is a companion volume to the 1963 *Collected Poems* and gives an opportunity to see how Grigson's work has developed over the past twenty years. Still bristling epigrammatic and sharply visual, the poems in the new volume are generally more relaxed and informal in tone. There is a larger proportion of rumbustious satirical poems and more, too, of the descriptive work, exploring with a curiously analytical eye English and French landscapes, buildings and skies.

In the sky scene at I move I notice
The greyness of the underside of the great
Cloud now above me; and a round
Hole through this grey, and in this hole
Blue, and the white
Top of a thunder-cloud unseen otherwise
away.

In the queue of the clouds.
The concern for a painstaking accuracy here is typical, as is the way variable line length and a flexible, bouncy rhythm are used to produce energy and surprise, pointed up by alliteration and internal rhyme. Hopkins is clearly a subtle, beneficent influence on many of these poems.

Like Hopkins, however, Grigson also has his mania, and they are especially prominent in the first half of

the volume. Among these quirks – a set of habits rather than a style – are a love of eccentric word-order, internal rhyme and repetition, a self-conscious announcement of intentions, and a tendency to see everything through the spectacles of books or paintings. The last two features, especially, become a distraction. There is too much of "I could now indicate . . .", "I think I must add . . .", and countless times, "I say". One line, also, of "Marvel's poem on Caesarian section", "sex jokes . . . Ancient as Brueghel", "that rootless/restful peak Donne pondered on", "dawn, as L. Babel wrote", "grapes as Pol de Limbourg/painted them" and "Cavaly has taught me/That much" and "it was small-fingered Hardy/thinking of the dead I thought about". One would prefer to have the poems without the shuffling, without the validation borrowed from other artists and writers.

When Grigson lets his own eye and voice work without hesitation or interference, the results are excellent. There are several fine poems about childhood, notable among which is "Raw Ream: Remembering, Now Dead, a Teacher" (my dictionary glosses "raw ream" as Cornish dialect for "cold cream"). Here is the last stanza:

Carrying white eggs for payment
I walk to you over the green
to learn reading, hearing this
sunshine of silence. Minnie, I say, these
are my money. You laugh, take the eggs,
(which you will give back to my mother),
skin ream off a pan, spread for me honey
on bread, yellow ream over honey.
The plainness of the language, and its disjunction ("hearing this/sunshine of silence") convey the freshness and strangeness of the child's perceptions, at once close and distant in memory.

Some of Grigson's best and most characteristic work has the air of being simultaneously serious and frivolous – a delicate poise which is often part of the subject itself.

It is time for more to be covered
deep soil, and to sink,
It is time for rather less to be printed
Or scattered through air, time for more
To be written again, by hand,
In black ink.

Too much is found,
It is time to tread, not to dig.
Let much more be lost through
Holes in our cotton pockets
More spent on amber, and on the quick
Transience of Roman candles and
rockets.

(If "transience" is a misprint, it is a happy one.) The frequency of really good poems is greater in the second half of the volume. There are a number of extended meditative or elegiac poems here which deserve special mention. "Gatekirk After Years" explores the value of shared perceptions of landscape, deliberately recalling and diverging from major poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge; a tacit and enriching use of allusion. "The Fiesta: Homines Luctusque Praestates" develops its reflections on religion, art and happiness from a passage of memorably exotic visual description:

Geraniums rampant through a high
Village caris which are pink and red
With petals of geranium. Spokes,
Rims, hubs, men, are pelted with
Geranium. So this over-the-ocean
Village plays, by custom and by rule,
And candles elsewhere today are set
In hollows of cathedrals on their
Iron trays and women pray, not all
Because they are old or mad.

And there is Grigson's elegy for Auden, a particularly strong and poignant poem, appropriately tinged with Auden's own tone of voice:

For some who were young
You became living healer, loving
Magician, for all of these years
The impostor of blessings
You were our fixture, our rhythm,
Speaker, bestower, of love for us all
And, forgiving, not of condemning,
extending.

To all who would read or would hear
Your engorgement of words,
"To Wyatt Auden" occurs just past the middle of the volume, and although Grigson has written against making biographical deductions from the ordering of poems, I wonder if what seems to me the greater achievement of the second half of the collection

A Stevenson discovery

James Campbell

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

An Old Song and a previously unpublished short story
Edited by Roger O. Swearingen
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Academic research rarely makes its findings known in a way which the general reader can immediately appreciate. To the man or woman who purchases a Stevenson novel for the enjoyment that reading it will bring, mention of "the unrivalled completeness of the Robert Louis Stevenson collections at Yale" in rare-book rooms and libraries might sound like an impressive monument to a Scottish author, but will generally be supposed to have little bearing on his or her future reading habits and choices. However, in the course of routine secondary research on Stevenson, Richard Swearingen made a discovery which causes him to utter

with his hero (though from a position of considerably greater safety): "the most beautiful adventures are not those we go to seek." He had been reading in the periodical *London*, to which it was known that Stevenson had contributed both signed and unsigned articles, an instalment of the anonymous story, "An Old Song", when the card-index in his mind whirled to a single manuscript leaf, recognized as Stevenson's, which he had examined years before. Further detective work proved that the ends fitted; Swearingen was able to make a new entry in *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson: A Guide*, and the public now has before it an undiscovered work by an author of genius.

Not, unfortunately, a work of genius. Some of the elements of "An Old Song" were to find fuller development, and receive more mature treatment, in *The Master of Ballantrae*, and as Swearingen remarks, in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, though only in the sense that much of Stevenson's fiction is based in the contrast of opposite personalities.

The action of "An Old Song" is

simple and theatrical; it concerns two cousins who are living under the care of a wealthy collector, Sir John Falconer. The elder boy, John, heir to the estate and also entitled to the hand of Mary, cleverest and more adventurous of the two; his cousin Malcolm is plainer and duller, but he is also, John perceives, more in love with Mary than he is himself, and she appears willing to return that love if only she were not affianced to John. In a characteristically flamboyant gesture, therefore, John renounces his claim to the estate, thus contradicting the law of primogeniture which his uncle holds sacred, and leaving Malcolm and Mary to a settled, luxurious life. Malcolm, no doubt by their nature as well as by tradition, must return, however, and John's return to Grangehead coincides with a terrible discovery which makes a mockery of all their lives.

At least, the discovery ought to inspire terror, and in the hands of the older Stevenson surely would have done so, but in "An Old Song", which Swearingen convincingly demonstrates to be his earliest surviving story apart from those written in childhood, the

action suffers from the author's addiction to melodrama – an addiction of which he was never quite cured (except perhaps in his last, incomplete novel, *Weir of Hermiston*) though its presence in the later work is usually equalled by a powerful psychological insight which is lacking here. Nor were Stevenson's gifts at the time capable of providing a structurally sound conclusion to the story: the violent emotions and strange coincidences are not resolved by the tame scuffle between the two cousins, which requires only the application of vinegar and brown paper to Malcolm's head. The later Stevenson may too often have set his narratives to the tune of clashing swords, but it suited their temper better than the brawl between John and Malcolm in the library.

"An Old Song" has its moments: Malcolm's dullness is said by John to be due to his knowing "nothing of sorrow"; it is John also who, in answer to Malcolm's solemn "It is providential and it means mischief", says, "As far as I can find out, providence generally does"; Mary is described as "an admirable woman, and all that . . . she had read the History of England (which is more than the

reader can say) . . . and "How I loved Livingstone" by Mr Stanley. "At those moments the text comes alive and the Old Song" declares itself. "Coleridge, especially when he was in need of comfort. Quotations from South in the notebooks for early November suggest that Mrs Montagu sent the volume along."

The other work included in the volume, "Edifying Letters of the Rutherford Family" was known already as being by Stevenson. It is incomplete but tantalizing for its autobiographical references, particularly to the quarrel which the young (and financially dependent) Stevenson had with his parents over religion.

The mountaineer and writer James Brown has selected Poems of the Scottish Hills: An Anthology (Edinburgh: University Press, 1979) paperback £5.90, 0 08 028476 0, a paperback of nearly 250 pages ranging widely in quality of subject-matter. Poets (130) of the represented not surprisingly include R. L. Stevenson, Norman MacCaig (who wrote the foreword) and Robert Garioch; more so, Keats, Chesterton and Geoffrey Faber.

